

Where they strike
 Deserts and rivers are rent apart
 And mountains
 Shrink to dust

IQBAL

دونیم ان کی مخواہ سے صحراء دریا
 سست کر پھاڑ ان کی بیبیت سے رائی
 اقبال

I Z Z A T – O – I Q B A L

Maj Gen (Retd)

SHAUKAT RIZA

Published By

**SCHOOL OF ARTILLERY
NOWSHERA**

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Preface

The recording of history has not been a solemn occupation with Pakistan Artillery. Some considered it a chore ; but it is a necessary and a gainful one. History is memory recalled and its void an stunt the mental growth of an individual as of an organization. Could this failure to record history be attributed to characteristic gunner modesty ? Not polite.

In the early years we were too young to appreciate the value of our experience. However no such excuse is valid in respect of 1965 and 1971 wars. The unit histories, with a few remarkable exceptions, are crammed full with such events as sports and VIP visits. In most cases the experience of war has been dismissed in one sentence. This book had therefore to be compiled from hundreds of interviews and personal accounts of officers who participated in the 1948, 65 and 71 wars. For his heroic effort to undertake such a task, the Regiment of Artillery is indebted to Major General Shaukat Riza for all times come. Within the above limitations, and some ore, this record is refreshingly forthright. There is D cloying rhetoric.

It has been my proud privilege to hold the appointment of Colonel Commandant from 1975 to 1978. This book reaffirms my faith that for an artilleryman there can be no credit greater than being a good gunner.

May it always be so.

RAWALPINDI
27 SEPTEMBER 1978

LT GEN AZMAT AWAN
COLONEL COMMANDANT

Acknowledgment

My grateful thanks :

To the Regiment of Artillery, Gen Tikka Khan, Lt. Gen. Azmat Awan, Brig Atta Malik and Maj Gen Ch. A. Rahman Khan, for affording me the privilege and honour of writing this history; to Brig Devereaux, Col Milne, Col Southey (Royal Artillery) for their accounts of 1947 and 1948, and for their continuing affection for Pakistan Artillery; to the hundreds of artillery officers who contributed towards this composition and who retained their humour throughout the interrogation; to Lt Gen Azmat Awan, Brig Atta Malik, Maj Gen Ch. A. Rahman Khan and Col. Enyatullah Beg Mirza for their guidance, their encouragement and for keeping me on the rails, but gently ; to Air Vice Marshal Sultan Mohammad Dutta and Gp Capt Safdar (PAF) for allowing me the use of their Academy library and for treating me like an honoured member of Pakistan Air Force; to Col N.D. Hassan (Cadet College Hassan Adbal) for his patience in correcting my drafts, his politeness while doing so and his perseverance in convincing me of my waywardness; to Brig Ghias Ktiurshid Ahmed (Commandant) Military College of Engineering for the production of maps ; to Brig Hafeez and Brig-Usman Khalid (Artillery School Nowshera) for making my stay enjoyable as well as productive ; to the staff and instructors of Artillery School for titillating my palate with their sharp ripostes; to Brig Ehsan (ASC Centre) Col Mokeet (Armd Corps Centre), Col Waheed

The Rising Crescent

The Commanding Officer 5 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment Maj Sher Jang had an inspiration. He invited the Quaid-e-Azam to visit 5 and 6 Anti-Aircraft Regiments to celebrate their arrival in Pakistan. The invitation was accepted with pleasure.

As the Quaid-e-Azam stepped out of his car the parade presented arms.

The officers and men saw a tall skeletal figure, his straight back belying his age; his firm step belying his frailty; his impeccable dress indicating his honesty, his idealism; his monocle accentuating his Victorian discipline, his classical values; his gaunt features, his hypnotic, smouldering eyes radiating power, etching the picture in their minds.

The parade froze in "Present Arms".

The Quaid-e-Azam walked towards the ranks preceded by Lt S. M. Ahsan (Pakistan Navy). No one interrupted. The commanding officer did not break the spell with "Order Arms". He was right. No one wanted the spell broken.

The Quaid - e - Azam reviewed the parade at "Present Arms", and we acquired a unique honour.

In later years some of us tried that a visiting head of state review the Regiment of Artillery at "Present Arms". The request was turned down. Fortuitously.

We have only one Quaid-e-Azam.



Qnайд-u-Axam reviewing 5 and 6 Regiments Parade

We Were Not Beggars

WE could be called poor in August 1947. General Headquarters was accommodated in a dishevelled lot of old arthritic buildings, their skins ravaged by long years of neglect. The Artillery Directorate had three mildewed telephone extensions on an asthmatic exchange. There were no chairs for captains. Few officers were familiar with secretariat minuting and procedures at General Headquarters. The confusion of flags on files and files in any one folder left one flabbergasted. The Northern Command of pre-Independence India had to assume the mantle of General Headquarters Pakistan, and the senior artillery officer in the Command became Director of Artillery - Brig Harris.

The Hindu Officers in Artillery Directorate India did their job rather well.

1 Anti-Tank Regiment with one hundred percent Muslim rank and file, well tested in battle, was disbanded in Ranchi - barely eight weeks before Partition. In its place Pakistan was awarded 2 Anti-Tank Regiment. This unit had been disbanded in March 1947. The Commanding Officer 1 Anti-Tank, Lt Col Tarr, rushed to Delhi to get the order rescinded. He never got past a grade two staff officer.

During World War II Indian Artillery reached a peak strength of sixty one regiments by 1944/45.

In order to deprive Pakistan of equitable share of artillery equipment thirty four regiments were disbanded by the end of July 1947, most of them in India. Of these, ten regiments were disbanded between 30 June and 30 July 1947, without reference to Muslim League ministers in the Interim Government. Their equipment was deposited in ordnance depots in India; according to rules of the game. Naturally. There were very few reserves of guns, vehicles or spares. Artillery ammunition was barely sufficient for three days' battle. Quarterly allotment of ordnance stores to Muslim majority areas had been suspended since middle 1946.

Before World War II a total of three Muslim officers had been commissioned into Indian Artillery, namely: Ghulam Farid, Wasi-ud-din and Tikka Khan. Major Ghulam Farid was killed by bandits while travelling from Lahore to Multan in April 1948. During World War II about a hundred Muslim officers were commissioned into Indian Artillery. No one had attended Staff College. Only two officers (Maj Ijaz and Capt Aslam) completed a Short Gunnery Staff Course in United Kingdom in April 1947. These two were employed in Artillery School Deolali. We had no Artillery School, no Artillery Centre.

But of course we were not poor. We had the whole future ahead of us.

We had soldiers who traced martial tradition from Scythian, Turkish, Mongol and Afghan ancestors.

We had men who had been tested in battle. We had officers who had been with guns throughout their service. We had people for whom guns were family. We had officers who were intolerant of substandard performance. In the messes we sat on camp stools, ate off tin plates and talked of war; not the price of toilet fittings. And every man contributed a month's pay towards the Quaid-e-Azam's relief fund.

We felt rich.

We inherited eight gun regiments, one survey battery, an air observation flight and two formation headquarters. The Frontier Corps had six 3,7 inch howitzers and fifteen 25 pounder guns. These were a part of Frontier Corps establishment and were used as direct fire weapons. There was a coast defence battery which was transferred to Pakistan Navy. The units and formations were redesignated as follows:—

Sr	Indian Artillery	Designation in Pakistan	Location
No	Designation		
1.	21 Mountain	1 Mountain	Kakul
2.	3 Field	2 Field	Rawalpindi
3.	4 (SP) Field	3 (SP) Field	Mardan
4.	5 Field	4 Field	Quetta
5.	18 Heavy Anti- Aircraft	5 Heavy Anti- Aircraft	Malir
6.	25 Light Anti- Aircraft	6 Light Anti- Aircraft	Matir

7. 33 Anti-Tank	7 Field	Multan
8. 38 Medium	8 Medium	Campbellpur
9. 2 Indian Survey Battery	13 Survey Battery	Nowshera
10. 659 Air OP Flight	1 Air OP Flight	Rawalpindi
11. Headquarters Artillery 7 Division	Headquarters I Army Group Royal Pakistan Artillery	Rawalpindi
12. Headquarters 2 Army Group Royal Indian Artillery	Headquarters 2 Army Group Royal Pakistan Artillery	Multan

The units we inherited were built around a steel frame of old mountain gunners. This was of course true of all Indian Artillery units raised during World War II from Northern classes. These men had been tempered through years of service in Frontier operations and honed in the battle-fields of Africa, Middle East, Italy, and Burma. Their reaction to battle was unexcited, instinctive, professional. With these men we raised regiment, after regiment, after regiment, and never felt sorry.

They were our gold.

1 Mountain Regiment

1 Mountain was the most experienced unit we acquired. Three of its batteries were a hundred years old. For half of their lives they had been firing (Peshawar) Battery in 1853-54

Designation in Pakistan	Raised	Period on active Service till 1947
1 (Jacob's) Battery	1843	45 years
2 (Kohat) Battery	1851	56 years
3 (Peshawar) Battery	1853	54 years
4 (Lahore) Battery	1885	27 years

In August 1947 the regiment was located in Razmak. In the same month Lt Col Milne, O.B.E., M.C was in Ranchi disbanding I Anti-Tank Regiment. On 1 September 1947 he was ordered to report to Brig Harris at Rawalpindi- On way to Pakistan he brought through from Ambala to Lahore one of the few convoys without casualties.

At Rawalpindi Milne was ordered, "Go to Razmak. Take over 21 Mountain".

Milne was delighted. He had served in the regiment for eight years. In fact he had served in all the six mountain regiments of Indian Artillery. And he had spent all his holidays trekking, from Quetta through Chitral to the Chinese border. What Milne did not know about mountains, mountain guns and mountain gunners, would not cover a thumb nail. In 1943 Arakan operations he commanded 17 Indian Mountain Battery and was recognised for his leadership with the award of a Military Cross. In 1945/46 he commanded 24 Mountain Regiment and was again recognised with an Order of British Empire. Milne drove his command to the limit of their

endurance, and beyond; giving them the joy and pride of triumph. He was respected, loved and called 'George' by his friends.

After evacuation of Razmak and other border stations it was decided to locate 1 Mountain in Kakul. The Artillery School India was started in Kakul, where the Pakistan Military Academy is now housed. Five miles from Kakul is Abbottabad, established by J.S.C. Abbot who raised 2 Hazara Mountain Train during the Second Sikh War. In 1848 he became Commissioner Hazara. Later he rose to be Lt Gen Sir J.S.C. Abbot.

When Lt RGLG Badshah and Lt Khalid Masud reported for duty Milne said, "So you are the educated ones. Do not unpack. You walk to Muzaffarabad. Your baggage will follow". They returned without sore feet, understandably excited with their experience. Col Milne accepted them.

2 Field Regiment

This unit was raised in April 1941 as a mixed regiment. It saw active service in Burma from May 1942 to March 1944. It had the distinction of participating in operations with 15 Corps, 11 Division, 14 Division, 20 Division, 23 Division and 26 Division. During the period November 1945 to July 1946 it operated in Indonesia supervising surrender of Japanese forces. It returned to Madras in 1946. The regiment was converted into one class composition at Dhond, eighty

miles north of Poona. It consisted of the following batteries:—

Indian Artillery	Pakistan Artillery
2 Indian Field Battery	6 Field Battery
35 Indian Field Battery	7 Field Battery
6 Indian Field Battery	9 Field Battery

In December 1946, 2 Field was ordered to move to Rawalpindi. Capt M. Aslam M.C., a pugnacious looking Rajput, was officer commanding train carrying guns and stores. The train had two locomotives, operated by a Muslim and a Hindu driver. The latter deserted during one of the halts. The regiment fitter Hav filled the gap until the next station, where Aslam obtained another driver at gun point. The train was rigged out for fighting its way through. Every flat car had two 25 pounder guns lashed side by side capable of firing in opposite directions, with twenty rounds each at zero fuze setting. In addition there was a light machine gun mounted at each end and three boxes of hand grenades. Every fourth car had twenty men, and there were front and rear guards. There were some half-hearted attacks on the train as it approached Amritsar, but the sight of guns proved too much for the marauding Sikhs.

The train arrived at Chaklala on a cold February morning. The men expected to be greeted with bunting, fanfare and dancing crowds. There was nothing, Nothing.

Aslam was not the type to get abashed by omissions in minor staff duties. In March 1944 he had been forward observer with 2/5 Royal Gurkha Rifles in attack against a Japanese road block on Tiddim road. The Japanese fought to the death. The Gurkha company commander was killed. Aslam took over and led the attack to success, in spite of his wounds. He was recognised with a battlefield award of Military Cross.

The name 'Westridge' flashed through Aslam's mind. As a small boy he had lived there with his father. He took out a jeep and drove straight to Westridge. The barracks were invitingly empty. Aslam allocated a generous portion of the cantonment to his regiment. Next he went and 'acquired' the Army Medical Corps mess on Peshawar road. The local garrison engineer charged Aslam with theft, with unauthorised occupation of government property; which charge did not affect his performance as a gunner. In February 1948 he was selected to attend Long Gunnery Staff Course in United Kingdom.

During 1947/48 war 2 Field ran open-house in the spirit of the times, providing friendliness and shelter to officers in transit. In 1959 the mess was transferred to Army Aviation, but artillery officers were never denied its hospitality.

In March 1947 Lt Col Beddulph assumed command and remained with the regiment till February 1948. Beddulph suffered the usual complexes in respect of educated natives. When 2/Lt Faiz Ali Chishti listed his college education

Beddulph threw up, "I do not know if we can make a soldier out of you". Chishti was turned over to a veteran battery commander. This gentleman regarded gunnery a military secret. He kept artillery training pamphlets locked in his imprest box, lest their contents be scattered by four winds, or purloined by eager, young 'educated types'. The second-in-command was Maj Mohammad Jan Kiani, a handsome officer who later rose to be Director Artillery.

3 (SP) Field Regiment

This unit was raised in December 1941 at Trimulgherry. It participated in 1944/45 Burma operations in support of 19 Division. The regiment arrived in Mardan in June 1946 and was converted to self-propelled in October 1946. The following batteries comprised the regiment in August 1947:—

8 (SP) Field Battery— Originally raised in September 1925 as 26 Mountain Battery, commanded by Maj Murad Ali. The first Pakistani officer to join the battery was Lt Atta Malik.

22 (SP) Field Battery— Raised in December 1941. In 1947 it had towed guns, commanded by Maj Ayub.

26 (SP) Field Battery— Claims descent from Bijli Top-Khana in Kashmir State Forces. Is supposed to have existed in 1848. This claim was considered invalid when units were redesignated in Pakistan. This battery was commanded by Maj A. R. Shami.

3 (SP) was the only military unit stationed in Mardan and favoured by the local population with undivided, sometimes unsolicited, attention. Living was cheap. But Mardan is well away from the flesh-pots of Peshawar and Pindi. And twenty officers living, eating, playing and working with painful regularity can wear each other out.

Not necessarily.

Twenty miles from Mardan is Malakand fort where Lt Churchill served in 1897 with 4 Hussars. In 1961 Queen Elizabeth II visited Malakand and spoke to the aging warrior six thousand miles away from the picket named after Churchill.

The lonely warrior can spend days, weeks, tracing sources of Kipling's tales, or origins of Gandhara culture or studying the tragic but inspiring trail of Syed Mohammad Ahmed Barelvi. Or he can hunt, fish and shoot chakor; if he has the means. Otherwise he can read, write, paint or tend roses. If nothing works he could get married.

3 (SP) was commanded by Lt Col Devereaux. He was popular with the regiment. It is a measure of his love for 3 (SP) that in 1977 while lying in hospital with a broken hip he wrote four letters concerning the history of his regiment. Lt Col Devereaux had just despatched his Madrassi field regiment to India when he was rung up by Brig Harris, "Eustace, you willing to take over 3 (SP) Regiment in Mardan"? Devereaux was delighted to be picked up to command a unit which he considered the equivalent of the elite Royal Horse Artillery. While on his way from Abbotabad he was halted, short of Haripur, by an armed crowd covering a road block. Devereaux cursed in Urdu and English, the crowd laughed back, cleared the road and sped the col on his way with 'Zindabad' and rifle shots in the air.

When Lt Atta Mohammad Malik (Ex Navy) arrived for pre-course training Col Devereaux asked, "Why Artillery"? Atta said, "Because the guns carry bigger punch than rifles". He was accepted and neither side ever regretted the decision. When Lt Mian Mansoor Mohammad and Lt Salim arrived they were greeted by the commanding officer, adjutant and their battery commanders. They were fed, housed and put to work as members of the family. They found the attitude of senior officers professional, stimulating. The young officers were introduced to some useful traditions. An inspecting officer or visiting VIP was first taken round the gun-park then to the vehicles, technical stores, and last of all to the guard

room; emphasising that for an artillery unit the GUN took precedence over everything else. Practice firing was serious business, carried out under conditions approximating to war without tom-toms, without dancing boys, without fancy shamianas. Mistakes were not forgiven. They were punished; without rancour on either side and in the spirit of maintaining family reputation.

Occasionally the commanding officer went round during maintenance parade and woe betide the officer standing around in immaculate over-all. It is a tribute to the maintenance standards of 3 (SP) that their guns manufactured in 1942 continued in service for over 35 years.

Gen Sir Douglas Gracey (C-in-C) visited 3 (SP) quite frequently. On one of his visits he was taken round the child welfare centre. The midwife took the general into the labour ward, and promptly went to work. Afterwards the Commander-in-Chief whispered to Col Devereaux, "Eustace, I have carried out many inspections in my time but never before have I been shown a regimental baby being bom".

4 Field Regiment

The regiment was raised at Ahmad-Nagar in December 1941. It had the following batteries:—

11 Field Battery	Punjabi Mussalmans
12 Field Battery	Mahrattas
13 Field Battery	Madrasis

The regiment saw action in Burma, March 1944 to June 1945. It participated in the battles of Kohima, Palel, Kalewa and Meiktila. During the period November 1945 to May 1946 it served in Indonesia and returned to Ranchi in May 1946. In July 1947 this unit received orders 'Not to be disbanded', and was awarded to Pakistan. It discarded the Mahratta and Madrassi batteries, picked up 12 (Nowshera) Battery from somewhere in India and arrived in Quetta in September 1947, less one battery and less guns. The third battery joined from Quetta.

In Quetta was located an elite Indian Artillery unit namely 12 (Para) Field Regiment. This unit had one hundred percent Punjabi Mussalman rank and file. It was caderised in early 1947 and disbanded a few weeks before Independence. 29 Battery from this regiment was transferred to 4 Field Regiment and redesignated 25 Battery. 12 (Para) Field was commanded by Lt Col Kumarmanglam, an open hearted Madrassi officer who became Chief of Army Staff, India 1966-69. He protested against the disbandment order, was over-ruled. The regiment was scattered, its equipment shovelled into Ordnance Depot Karachi.

12 (Para) Field had CaptIhsan-ul-Haq Malik and Capt Mohammad Aslam Khan (Tojo) as troop commanders. Both were favourites of Kumarmanglam, Aslam for his wit and Ihsan for his bluntness. When Gen Kumarmanglam visited Pakistan in 1966 he made a point of seeking out Aslam and Ihsan. The batteries of 4 Field were redesignated as follows:—

Indian Artillery

12 (Nowshera) Battery
raised in 1919 as a
mountain battery
converted to field in
1946

11 Field Battery raised
in February 1942

29 (Para) Field Battery
raised in March 1943
as a mountain battery
converted to field in
1946.

Pakistan Artillery

5 (Nowshera) Field
Battery.

23 Field Battery.

25 Field Battery.

5 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment

This unit was raised at Drigh Road as 'S' Regiment in April 1941 and renamed as 2 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment in May 1941. From December 1941 to May 1945 it saw active service in Burma and returned to Gulanchi in June 1945. It arrived in Malir in September 1947 without guns. The regiment was re-equipped from Ordnance Depot Karachi. The following batteries comprised 5 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment:—

Indian Artillery

1 Heavy Anti-Aircraft
Battery

Pakistan Artillery

12 Heavy Anti-Aircraft
Battery

7 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery	18 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery
8 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery	24 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery

5 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment and 6 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment were put in Malir cantonment which was set up during World War II as United States Air Force base. The bungalows and barracks were scattered in the fashion of an aborigine settlement, defying definition of pattern. But unlike aborigine settlement, the buildings were widely spaced. The dispersal and lack of pattern was, no doubt, in deference to security against hostile air attack. In the maze of tracks and monotony of buildings the new-comers often lost themselves, unable to distinguish destination from origin, even in daytime and even a few hundred yards away.

Karachi climate is uncongenial to the Punjabis and Pathans and the barren landscape of Malir those days, flattened out vision as much as desire. The Americans had the necessary transportation to overlook distances. The Pakistanis had to rely on muscle power and became acutely conscious of their feet. To the bored soldier Karachi was too near to resist temptation and too far away to catch up with muscle power. But the officers and men in Malir were resourceful, energetic people who were too full of life to be flattened out by the landscape. During week days everyone worked so hard that night brought blissful oblivion. On week-ends trips were

organised to Karachi where men could exhaust their resources in the garish kabab-shops of Bunder Road, and then be glad to recoup in monotonous Malir.

6 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment

This unit was raised as ⁴tT Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment in March 1941 and renamed 1 Indian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment a few weeks later. It's No. I Battery saw action in defence of Singapore June to December 1941. After the fall of Singapore 6 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery replaced 1 Battery. The regiment, less battery, participated in the first Burma Campaign, fighting all the way from Moulmin to the Indian border. The regiment went into action again in December 1944 advancing from Ramu to Rangoon, Prome and Magwe. In December 1945 it returned to Poona. In March 1946 it was converted into Punjabi Mussalman class composition, and renamed 25 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment.

The unit arrived in Karachi in September 1947, without its guns. However the commanding officer, Lt Col Hutchins, got the regiment on its feet within a matter of weeks. In December 1947 Lt Col Hutchins was killed in an air crash off Korangi Creek. He was an exuberant character, loved for his identity with Pakistan and admired for his professionalism. Every one mourned his loss. Sincerely.

Col Hutchins was replaced by Lt Col Calver. 6 Light Anti-Aircraft was also put up in Malir and shared the loves

and hastes of 5 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment. The batteries were redesignated as under:—

Indian Artillery	Pakistan Artillery
3 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery	14 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery
6 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery	20 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery
7 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery	21 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery

7 Field Regiment

This unit was raised as 2 Anti-Tank Regiment in April 1941. It had four batteries, two Punjabi Mussalmans, one Sikh and one Ahir. In the first Burma campaign 2 Anti-Tank performed dual roles of anti-tank and infantry. It acquitted itself creditably in the battles of Taungyi, Magwe, Yenan Yang and Kyankse. In December 1944 it was equipped with thirty six anti-tank guns and thirty six 3 inch mortars, and was put through amphibious training for assault landings in Burma or Malaya. However the war ended before the landings. In 1945, 2 Anti-Tank left for Malaya and then on to Java. It was disbanded in March 1947 and resuscitated in June 1947. It was re-named 33 Anti-Tank Regiment and stationed in Multan. The regiment had three of its own batteries and one battery ex 1 Anti-Tank Regiment. In January 1948 the unit was converted to field. Thereupon the

three senior batteries were converted to field and 29 Battery stayed on as anti-tank.

Indian Artillery	Pakistan Artillery
1 Anti-Tank Battery (Ex 1 Anti-Tank Regiment)	11 Field Battery
5 Anti-Tank Battery (Ex 2 Anti-Tank Regiment)	15 Field Battery
6 Anti-Tank Battery (Ex 2 Anti-Tank Regiment)	16 Field Battery
	29 Anti-Tank Battery

Multan greeted the new-comers with its square blessings:—

Gard, Garma, Gada, O Goristan (dust, heat, beggars, and grave yards)

At Multan Ahmad Shah Abdali was born. His father, Khan Zaman, had emigrated from Herat in 1712. Khan Zaman built his house, Kara Kalan, opposite Commissioner's house, and married for the second time in Multan. Out of this union Ahmad Shah was born. Hardened by the local heat and dust, blessed by beggars and sustained by saints, Ahmad Shah went on to defeat the Mahrattas in the last battle at Panipat.

7 Field found that the double decker barracks for men had their fans removed, as these were authorized the three senior

batteries were converted to field and 29 Battery stayed on as anti-tank.

Indian Artillery

1 Anti-Tank Battery
(Ex 1 Anti-Tank Regiment)
5 Anti-Tank Battery
(Ex 2 Anti-Tank Regiment)
6 Anti-Tank Battery
(Ex 2 Anti-Tank Regiment)

Pakistan Artillery

11 Field Battery
15 Field Battery
16 Field Battery
29 Anti-Tank Battery

Multan greeted the new-comers with its square blessings:—

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7 Field found that the double decker barracks for men had their fans removed, as these were authorized only to British

troops. This rationale escaped the manacled comprehension of mere Pakistani soldiers. The fans were re-installed some years later, when we tired of being sub-British.

7 Field was commanded by Lt Col Jarvis MBE. He was not the usual hard-mouthing gunner. Jarvis was polite, gentle, but 'Mean and hungry'. Oblivious of Multan's blessings, stripped to waist he went about his business of training the regiment and cheering up the landscape. Jarvis got the regiment converted to field, and ready for war in about three months. Not merely in terms of firing a regimental concentration but truly tuned to battle. Maj Muzaffar was second-in-command. A robust, gregarious Janjua Rajput he delighted in being a gunner. But he was inclined towards kindness than acerbity of a normal gunner.

8 Medium Regiment

This unit was raised in January 1941 as 3 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment. From January 1941 to June 1945 it was employed in defence of Assansol, Jamshedpur, Tatanagar, Tejgaon, Jessore and Begachi. In 1946 it was converted to 2 Indian Medium Regiment and also to Punjabi Mussalman class composition. It was equipped with 6 inch howitzers. In January 1947 the regiment was redesignated 38 Medium, It arrived in Campbellpur in March 1947 and moved to Peshawar in November 1947. Here it took over equipment and lines from 40 Medium Regiment which departed for India.

Peshawar will perhaps never lose its romance. It is the last city in the Sub-Continent on the "Golden Road to Samarkand", and to the lands associated with Babar, Taimur Aqa and Changez Khan. It still carries the aura of Kipling and the flavour of Central Asia. Living in Peshawar has the subconscious feeling of living on the edge of adventure. As late as 1947 movement beyond Jamrud was a hazard. And even now one goes to bed half expecting to be shaken out by rifle fire. But for 8 Medium the romance was in its new equipment and an effervescent lot of young Pakistanis. Lt Col K. Wasi-ud-Din took over command in February 1948. A scion of Nawabs of Dacca his uncle Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din and his father Khawaja Shahab-ud-Din played significant part in Pakistan movement. The family has been looked upon as Bengali by Punjabis and Punjabi by Bengalis. Khawaja Wasi was untouched by these interpretations. For him there were either good gunners or bad gunners. And his fuze length with bad gunners was zero. The regiment responded superbly. 8 Medium had following batteries:—

Indian Artillery

3 Medium Battery

4 Medium Battery

Pakistan Artillery

17 Medium Battery

Two troops of
4 guns each

19 Medium Battery

Two troops of
4 guns each

In November 1948 Lt Col. S. Southey took over command. He was born in Chaman in 1903 and the family had over fifty years association with Pathan and P.M. soldiers. His father had been second-in-command of 124 Baluchis in France 1914. Col Southey's birth and family association gave him instinctive sympathy with Pakistani soldiers. He obtained results, apparently with effortless ease.

13 Survey Battery

This battery was raised as 2 Indian Survey Battery at Deolali in March 1943, as part of 20 Indian Survey Regiment. It participated in 1944-45 Burma operations in support of 11 East African and 19 Divisions in the battles of Kabaw, Kalewa, Irrawady crossing and Mandalay.

Artillery surveyors in those days were a scarce commodity and consequently a lot of their quirks were generally tolerated. Education level ranged between matric and intermediate. It was a difficult unit to command. The battery commander, Maj Shafi, was an old soldier with half a dozen campaign medals bearing witness to his experience. The second-in-command was Capt Ajaib, also an old soldier with long years of operational experience in NWFP and World War II. Ajaib was a large hearted gentleman with a disarming smile which no earthquake could mar. He kept the peace between Maj Shafi and chaffing young troop commanders.

13 Survey Battery was under overall command of Director Artillery, administrative command of Artillery School and affiliated to 1 AGRPA for operations. The battery commander could exercise powers of commanding officer (Lt Col) only outside Nowshera. Maj Shafi went along with the command arrangement. His successor found a way round it. Whenever a jawan trespassed he was taken for a ride across Attock bridge, awarded the necessary punishment, and back to Nowshera. The men quickly understood the new game and gave up trying out the battery commander. 13 Survey Battery consisted of three troops:—

Troop	Commander
Survey	Capt Shaukat
Flash Spotting	Capt B. A. Malik
Sound Ranging	Capt Sami

The above officers were appointed after completion of Short Observation Course in U.K.

1 Air Observation Flight

This unit consisted of five Auster aircraft of World War II vintage. Air Observation units in British India, and therefore Pakistan, belonged to the Regiment of Artillery. The aircraft were purchased out of Army funds but the Army had neither airfields nor ground personnel to operate them. The units were therefore under technical flying control of Air Force. The pilots were selected artillery officers who had been trained

to fly. In the case of India and Britain the Air Force imparted necessary training. In our case the Pakistan Air Force was beginning to set up shop in Risalpur. Meanwhile we had no artillery officers to fly the aircraft. In March 1947 Capt Azmat Awan was dispatched to U. K. for necessary training. He returned in June 1948 and took over command of the flight. Next, a batch of six officers went to U.K. from which only two graduated as pilots, i.e. Capt Jabbar and Capt Kirmani.

The role of Air Observation units was primarily observation of artillery fire and secondly reconnaissance. The confusion of technical flying control, administrative control, operational compulsions, teething troubles would have driven many a good man to tears, drink or knife. But Azmat Awan is a cool, well integrated, highly proficient officer whom it is impossible to drive to tears or drink. And he did not take to knife. He managed the best possible deal out of PAF and gave his best to the Regiment of Artillery. 1 Air Observation Flight was accommodated in Chaklala in wooden shacks. But the officers were young and had stars in their eyes.

New Life in Artillery Directorate

In January 1948 Brig Richard Morley DSO, MC took over as Director Artillery. He had commanded artillery formations in North Africa and was Commander Corps Artillery 15 Corps during 1944-45 Burma operations.

Like most gunners Morley was hard of hearing, which meant he heard no nonsense and never missed anything he wanted to hear. He was a salty character, sparing with words, and more sparing with praise. But he was an excellent judge of character, and knew where to place who. In February 1950 artillery officers who had attended 1949 Staff Course were put through an Artillery Staff Duties Course at Nowshera. One morning while students were working out task-tables Brig Morley suddenly descended on the class. Without preliminaries he said, "You staff officers listen to me. One of these days you will come across some official letter starting with the word 'humble' and ending with 'obedient'. Too often staff officers forget who they are". And he walked out.

During the tea break a student asked him, "How did we do at Staff College"? He shot back, "Is'nt it enough that I have not cursed you". That was his way of saying, "you are alright".

Brig Morley really made the Regiment of Artillery. He never missed a range practice or a major exercise. And still he found time to keep abreast of General Headquarters conferences, organise units, formations, set up schools, centre and messes. He caught at every straw to give Pakistan Army a balanced artillery arm. He set out procedures for administrative inspections, standards of professional conduct and made sure that talent was recognised.

Perhaps the first unit visited by Morley was 8 Medium Regiment at Peshawar. He stayed for the night, played

bridge and gossiped with the officers. The young braves were delighted with his rough humour and his ingenuous ripostes. Next morning Morley asked for his mess bill. Capt Ihsan-ul-Haq Malik, adjutant, demurred. Morley insisted. Ihsan promised to send the bill to Artillery Directorate. Two weeks later Ihsan was interviewed for regular commission by the Adjutant General. On way back to Peshawar he called on Director Artillery. Morley said, "Ihsan, I believe you have been approved for regular commission. You are not getting it". Ihsan did not show the expected reaction. Morley softened. "Until I get my mess bill". A month later he acquired Ihsan as his GSO-III.

Morley never gave lectures on leadership. After 1965 war he sent the following letter to Pakistan Artillery :—

ALL RANKS PAKISTAN ARTILLERY

"At the close of the year, I write to your Director asking him to convey to you, all ranks of the Pakistan Artillery, my congratulations for the outstanding contribution rendered by you to your country during the recent operations in the war with India.

Some of you have received awards for valour, outstanding devotion to duty and skill in the use of your arm.

I know from experience that there will be many of you "unnamed" who deserve the special thanks of your country,

but circumstances only permit a blanket commendation and thanks from your commanders.

It is the team spirit that wins battles. It is obvious to me that the spirit of the Pakistan Artillery is such, that as a supporting arm, you have given your hearts, courage and skill in the service to your commanders, without fear, during the vigours of the campaign without flinching, despite long periods of acute fatigue and lack of information, so common when war is fought on wide fronts.

I commend to you verses 1-14 Ecclesiastics XLIV, written so many years ago and trust that they will bring comfort to those who have lost comrades and members of their family, private and regimental.

I am proud to have been associated with you in the past.

A privilege I will always treasure and remember'

R. Morley

The letter is our prized possession.

The GSO-I in Artillery Directorate was Lt Col J. R. Gutch. He was an old mountain gunner and had commanded a regiment in Burma, 1945. Gutch was a short wiry man, mephistophelean eye-brows, an easy smile, and molten lava when ignited. It was an education to watch him work.

Whenever he had to pass a message on telephone he prepared a brief, told the other party to get pen and paper, gave out the message in clear sharp bursts, called for check back and "OUT". No chit chat. His minting was equally clear and sharp; and his conferences.

On one occasion the Army Standing Establishment Committee was considering establishment of a field regiment. The Military Finance representative asked, "Col how many times do you fire the entire twenty four guns on a target". There was a brief exchange:—

Gutch, " It depends on the target. You may need just one gun or a hundred or even more".

Military Finance, "Then why do you need a tractor for every gun"?

Gutch, "My dear chap I am not here to teach you gunnery. You go get yourself a couple of donkeys as far as I am concerned".

The Table of Organization and Equipment was passed.

1 Army Group Royal Pakistan Artillery

Its commander was Brig J. M. L. Crawford. He had been awarded the rank on assumption of command in Pakistan. Crawford was a tall gangling man, always swishing a horse-tail fly swish to accentuate his abrasive personality.

He used to drive his own staff car to the limit of its acceleration. Every now and then he would shout at his intelligence officer (Lt Akhtar Abdul Rehman), "What is the grid reference of this place"? On one such drive he hit a donkey. Crawford stopped the car and ordered Akhtar, "Put this thing on charge for obstructing a Pakistani brigadier in execution of his duty".

On a visit to 2 Field he saw a subaltern bringing his guns on zero line with a director. Crawford shouted. "Why the hell don't you use aiming point"? The subaltern replied that the director method was most accurate. Crawford cursed, picked up a prismatic compass went aiming at guns and told the gun position officer that No. 3 gun was out by one five minutes. Crawford could not read ordinary print without an oversize magnifying glass and the compass had no graduation less than 30 minutes. The subaltern held his ground. Crawford shouted. "Don't teach me gunnery, boy".

This was Crawford's way of testing the grit of an officer.

In those early days we were not hamstrung in a straight-jacket of over centralized regulations. Authority corresponded with responsibility. And unit commanders exercised the power and privilege of training and administering their commands. The headquarter was located at Westridge, only two miles from General Headquarters, two hundred yards from the nearest unit and eighty miles

from

the next nearest. The unit next door was generally ignored by the headquarters. The units in outstations had little problem in trying to live their own lives. Trunk calls were painful. There were no helicopters. The commander visited outstation units about once a month but there was no exaggerated hospitality or overemphasis on command relationship. The visits were accepted as mutually beneficial.

Maj Amjad Ali Khan was brigade major. His intelligence, education and sympathetic understanding balanced Crawford's personality. Headquarter 1 Army Group was affiliated to 7 Division and in 1955 was designated HQ Royal Pakistan Artillery 7 Division.

2 Army Group Royal Pakistan Artillery

This headquarter was raised as 59 AGRIA at Seccunder Abad. Shortly before Independence it was renamed 2 AGRIA and located at Peshawar. In November 1947 it was located at Karachi as HQ RPA Sind Area, and from there to Multan as 2 AGRPA, and finally redesignated HQ Artillery 10 Division, April 1954. The formation was commanded by Brig Findlay. He had lost an eye and a hand in an ammunition accident during his early career. But he hunted with the elan of a subaltern. Findlay respected the line of authority and responsibility separating him from his

subordinate commanders. He adhered to his own level of command and never went nosing around battery cook-houses.

However, when a misdemeanour reached his notice there was no mercy.

3 Army Group Royal Pakistan Artillery (AA)

This formation was raised in March 1950. Antiaircraft units had hitherto been under command 2 AGRPA. In the absence of an independent antiaircraft command this was perhaps the best arrangement to prevent units in Malir over-stretching their independence. We had only two anti-aircraft units. Money was supposedly tight and we did not have the heart to pick government pocket. But after the Kashmir war the periodic panic sirens emphasized need of a headquarters to plan the air defense of Pakistan in conjunction with our Air Force.

Lt Col Calver, commanding officer 6 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment was appointed officiating commander. In October 1950 Brig Pinchard took over command. Maj Shirazi a fresh graduate from Staff College Quetta had been appointed DAA & QMG in May 1960. Within a month he took over as brigade major and his earlier post was occupied by Maj InayatUllah (FFR). The appointment of an infantry officer in a key artillery job was of course very odd. But at that time artillery officers were in short supply and priority was given to active units.

Grouping of Artillery Units

A building badly designed remains bad in perpetuity irrespective of periodic alterations. This is even more pertinent to institutions.

In 1947/48 it was quite possible that with one mountain, four field and one medium regiment to go round approximately five divisions and some independent brigades the guns be parcelled out to formations in ineffective bits. This would have been disastrous for development of artillery as much as for Pakistan Army as a whole. Artillery units would have remained at rudimentary level of training and the supported formations would never have comprehended employment of large scale fire power at divisional and army levels. There was pressure for some such solution; from within artillery as much as from outside. The pressure was ignored, and artillery units were grouped as under:—

1 Army Group RPA

- 1 Mountain Regiment
- 2 Field Regiment
- 3 (SP) Field Regiment
- 8 Medium Regiment

2 Army Group RPA

- 4 Field Regiment
- 7 Field Regiment (Converted from 2 Anti-Tank)
- 5 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment) Transferred to
- 6 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment) 3 AGRPA in

May 1950.

3 Army Group RPA

- 5 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment

6 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment

13 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment—raised in April 1950

45 Independent Light Anti-Aircraft Battery Anti-Aircraft Artillery Operations' Room-raised on 27 July 1951.

Artillery Directorate

13 Survey Battery
1 Air OP Flight

The head of a mountain goat in profile was selected as formation sign for the army groups; in tradition of the battering ram used to breach defences; symbolising the offensive character of massed artillery fire.

Setting up of Artillery Centre

Twenty miles from Emperor Sher Shah's Fort at Attock is the sleepy town of Cambellpur. On the hills across the river from Attock Fort Prince Jalal-ud-Din, son of Mohammad Ala-ud-Din Shah Khawrazme, made his last stand against Changez Khan. When left with nothing but his sword and his horse the Prince plunged his horse a hundred feet down into the mighty river. The Khan held up his hand. The horsemen halted. The mounted bowmen, who were about to shoot Jalal-ud-Din, lowered their bows. Changez Khan told his generals, "Fortunate the father to have such a son. I wish he was my son".

Thereafter the Mongols kept their wars away from India.

Campbellpur is on the north-western edge of Potwar plateau. This area is home to lithe, handsome, Agile Awans,

razor-edged Rajputs and a picking of prickly, proud Pathans. For generations these men have had few pursuits other than hunting and soldiering. The landscape is harsh but beautiful; to provide sport to the hunter and training to the soldier. The climate is heavenly in spring and autumn, punishing during summer and winter; a recipe for breeding durable, gallant soldiers.

Perhaps some of the new arrivals from Ambala may not have been enchanted by the desolation which met them. There were a few knock-kneed huts suffering in odd poses on stony wastes. Less than fifty niggardly trees were trying to cheer up the place. And there was all the God's good earth that the centre would need. And there were bull-ants.

By 1946 Indian Artillery training centres had been reduced to two i.e. 'North' at Ambala and 'South' at Polachi. The Ambala Centre catered for Punjabi Mussalmans, Sikhs, Jats, Rajputs, Ahirs and Punjabi Brahmins. The Muslim element of Ambala Centre came to Pakistan.

Col Stirling—commandant designate—arrived in Cambellpur towards the third week of September 1947. He accepted the desolation as a gift from God, suited to the defiant mood of young Pakistan, where we could build our own future. Stirling was a dour Scotsman and the desolation challenged his Scottish mettle. He had no rest, gave no rest until he saw his dream beginning to come true, and then he drove everyone all the more relentlessly.

The commandant brought fifteen hundred recruits and nine hundred boys. These men did not quite transform the place into an oasis in one short week, or one month, or even one year. But they were not defeated. By 1950 the place was indeed transformed. The huts were straightened, thousands of sheesham trees were planted, gun parks, class rooms, small arms ranges, playing fields, children school all were created with blistered but loving hands. And the young gunners trained for war.

Setting up of Artillery School Nowshera

To serving artillerymen the ranges in Nowshera are a dreadful place where every observation post is an abattoir, every target an enemy and every gun position a sore.

The landscape seems to have been put together by a malicious deity for the special inconvenience of subalterns. The rocks are bare, boorish and littered with jagged, offensive progeny. The nullahs do not carry water. They carry pulverised stone. They are wide and deep, their banks deceptively merging with each other. There are crests where there should be only plain ground. The nullahs should run from Manki hills in south to Kabul river in north. They do so grudgingly, and while in the target area they lose respect for gravity, or logic, or calculations of the observer. There is constant wind which changes direction for no particular reason except to spoil observation or meteorological calculations. And finally the range smiles or scowls according to the mood of the sun, or perhaps the mood

of the senior officer watching the fun.

On Nowshera ranges the young officer realises that guns do not lie, that precision in artillery fire is obtained through knowledge and not gimmicks, that admission of errors implies the ability to rectify them. For these reasons, and some more, the Nowshera ranges are particularly designed to train sharp, forthright gunners. No other ranges are so good, or so wicked or so wrapped with stories.

To the retired artillermen the ranges have nostalgic attraction. Every observation post, every target and every gun position conjures some old adventure. One can almost retrace his artillery service going over the ranges, recalling how good they were at one time and how beastly when you took them lightly.

But Nowshera station is a homely place. Here armour, artillery, and even infantry toast each other in earnest. The club is only a hundred yards from Kabul river. The service is friendly and nowhere you find malis with such astonishingly good taste and love for gardening. There are some good riding areas which provide the thrill and joy of a hard **Sunday** morning ride. The local bazar is mercifully narrow, and the pedestrian is not a hunted animal chased by howling scooters. The shopkeepers are not devouring ogres. They take one's skin with a smile. Shopping is fun.

For Pakistani soldiers Nowshera has special significance. At Akora Khattak, nine miles from Nowshera,

Syed Mohammad Ahmed Barelv defeated a Sikh army sent by Ranjit Singh. The Sikh ruler was so impressed that he offered the Syed the area north of river Indus. The Syed declined to deal with the Sikh.

The site where Artillery School is located, and the surrounding area was awarded to gunners in perpetuity by General Officer Commanding Nowshera in December 1907. It is a natural location for the Artillery School with the ranges barely twenty minutes drive from class rooms. The entire station was offered to artillery in 1948 if we agreed to house both the school and centre in Nowshera. We accepted location only for the school. Had the centre and school been in the same station we would have had only the centre. Being bigger brother the centre would have set the style.

The commandant Artillery School Deolali was Brig Frowen D. S. O. He was a fair man who tried to ensure a fair distribution of equipment between India and Pakistan. He told the British officers who had volunteered for service in Pakistan, "You are no longer neutrals. You are Pakistani officers and will work as such". The Pakistani contingent was scheduled to move by train, Deolali - Bhopal - Delhi - Amritsar - Lahore. Brig Frowen anticipating that the train might be ambushed insisted on movement by sea, Bombay - Karachi. Frowen was promptly replaced by Brig K. S. Gayani. The Indian commandant tried to hustle him out of Deolali, and out of India. But Frowen had true grit, and he carried weight. He rang up General Lockhart,

General Officer Commanding Southern Command, and told him with his characteristic sharpness, "I am not moving until I see Pakistani gunners safely on their way home". He saw them off at Bombay, saluted as the ship sailed, drove straight back to the airport and left for United Kingdom. In 1951 he returned to Pakistan as commander corps artillery.

The advance party (Maj Murad Ali, Maj Shaukat Hayat) reached Nowshera on 5 November 1947. Col Gallagher was appointed commandant. He was a kindly man who tried to keep peace between Pakistani officers overly conscious of Independence and British officers understandably conscious of losing the Empire. He humoured the Pakistanis and contained the British. Both British and Pakistani officers went full tilt to get the school going as soon as possible. The school made its debut on 1 December 1947 with the following courses :—

Gunnery StaffNCOs

Young OfficersInterrupted by move from
Deolali.

Young OfficersStarted in Pakistan.

Artillery pamphlets, in those days, were a rare commodity. The shortage was turned to good use. Students and instructors worked harder. Some copied pamphlets in long hand. Some tried to memorise them. All of them maintained pocket books con training notes on deployment,

observation of fire, command post procedures, predicted fire and maintenance of guns.

Maj Dunlop was the next senior to Col Gallagher. He was a reservist officer who had won a D. S. O. in World War I. To the Indian artillery officers commissioned from Deolali during World War II he was known as 'Daddy' Dunlop; which is exactly what he was to the young cadets. The chemistries of Gallagher and Dunlop were like milk and gear oil. Dunlop departed.

Maj Shaukat Hayat was a soft spoken gentleman with a stern face and a heart of gold. He seldom smiled, perhaps to shield his over-sensitive nature. He was a true gunner and proud to be one. In 1950 Hayat graduated from Long Gunnery Staff Course (UK) and took over as chief instructor at Nowshera. He established uncompromising standards of professional performance, and his students carried the hallmark. Shaukat Hayat died of cancer in 1958 and the Regiment of Artillery lost a valuable asset.

Maj Mian Ijaz Ahmad had a brain which worked faster than the speed of shell, and had no patience with slower minds. He was the only Muslim officer who had served as brigade major artillery before Independence. Ijaz held many key appointments outside artillery and deservedly rose to general rank. But whatever his assignment his professional performance and his social conduct remained true to the artillery in his blood.

Capt Aslam (Tojo) carried a big head, figuratively as much as symbolically. He was exceptionally intelligent. His professional qualifications and his intelligence should have enabled him to attain high rank. But Aslam enjoyed a good laugh and was seldom inconvenienced by the rank of his target.

Setting up of Anti-Aircraft Artillery School

Before World War II the air defence of India was not a major consideration for strategic planning. The Indian Army was organised and trained primarily for operations in NWFP and the Persian Gulf. In case of overseas commitment against a European power it was assumed that anti-aircraft protection would be provided by British units. The Government of India was rudely shaken out of its strategic complacency when the Japanese overran Malaya and Burma in short order. During the course of first Burma Campaign Japanese aircraft visited Calcutta. The raid did little damage to life and property. But it triggered a drive for providing air defence to at least the major ports overlooking Bay of Bengal.

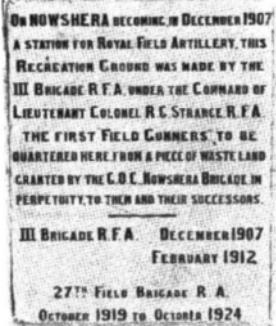
The Anti-Aircraft School was raised in August 1941 in Napier Barracks Karachi. Between August 1941 .to August 1947 the school was loose shunted around Karachi six times and finally dropped in Malir to poultice its bruised bottom. There were three Muslim officers in the school, Maj Jamshed, Maj S. M. Aslam and Maj M.A. Ansari. They had graduated from Gunnery Staff Course (AA) in United Kingdom.

After Independence the Pakistan portion of Anti-Aircraft School was disbanded on recommendation of Brig Harris, Director Artillery. In fact Harris had recommended that Pakistan had no need for any artillery school, anti-aircraft or field. The Artillery School (Field) Nowshera was saved by Pakistani officers and Maj Lindsay the chief instructor. The Anti-Aircraft School had no sponsor and was decapitated.

In 1949 Brig Morley initiated action to resuscitate Anti-Aircraft School. But while the case was being processed the school opened unofficially borrowing instructors and equipment from the local anti-aircraft units. It was accorded official recognition in November 1950. Immediately after Independence Maj M. S. Fazli was sent to UK for Gunnery Staff Course. He returned in January 1951 and took up duties as instructor. Fazli had the distinction of serving twice as commandant; December 1959 to November 1962 and May 1966 to September 1967. Mausoof Ansari was the first Pakistani commandant; from January 1952 to January 1954.



Quaid-e-Azam visited Artillery
School Nowshera on 13 April, 48



Facsimile of the
Foundation Stone of
III Brigade RFA
Recreation Ground



Old Boat Bridge at Attock



Gen Sir Douglas Gracey Decorating a JCO in 3 (SP)
Field Regiment

A Testing of Mettle

(Map No. 1)

WE talked of war. In September 1947 the inter-communal killings of Punjab spilled over into Kashmir. The population of Kashmir is predominantly Muslim. On 26 October 1947 the Maharaja opted for India, and there were apprehensions that the demographic structure might be adjusted in the manner of Punjab. As the tide of Muslim refugees flowed into neighbouring Punjab and Frontier it became exceedingly difficult for the Pakistan Government to restrain volunteers entering Kashmir and doing their bit.

The terrain of Kashmir is not suited for large scale mobile operations by regular forces. It is suited for guerilla operations; but the people of Kashmir are not. Except for the Rajputs in Punch, Mirpur and the hill tribes of Gilgit Agency there are few who have stomach for violence.

The striking beauty of Kashmir landscape is equaled only by the unbelievable misery of its people. The town-dwellers of Srinagar Valley are intelligent, industrious, artistic, refined and under-nourished. For generations these people have been content with pursuing petty business and petty chores under alien, oppressive rulers. The village folk are illiterate, poor, hungry, disease-ridden and haunted by fear

of worst poverty, hunger and disease. They have no appetite for politics. In 1947 the sophisticated, self-generating, irreversible techniques of guerilla violence were little known outside Russia and China. Furthermore, Pakistan had neither the military means nor the political and social cast to initiate and pursue prolonged guerilla war.

The Quaid-e-Azam thought of sending regular troops. The Commander-in-Chief, General Gracey called for Auckinleck, who put up two objections. There was a risk of all out war in which British officers would be ranged against each other. Secondly, Pakistan Army was in no shape to take on Indian Army within weeks after Partition. He may have been right. But on 20 April 1948 General Gracey concluded his appreciation with the following recommendations:—

Page 305 para 3, "Emergence of Pakistan".

(Ch. Muhammad Ah)

"It is obvious that a general offensive is about to start very soon now If Pakistan

is not to face another serious refugee problem with about 2,750,000 people uprooted from their homes, if India is not to be allowed to sit on the doorsteps of Pakistan to the rear and on the flank, at liberty to enter at its will and pleasure; if the civilian and military morale is not to be affected to a dangerous extent; and if subversive political forces are not to be encouraged and let loose

within Pakistan itself, it is imperative that the Indian Army is not allowed to advance beyond the general line Uri-Punch-Naushera”.

Perhaps the geography of Cease Fire Line in Kashmir and the manner of partition of Punjab were some kick off world strategy—East versus West.

Kashmir is wedged between China in the north and east, India in the south, and Pakistan in the west. In the north, Gilgit Agency has approximately fifty miles border with Afghanistan. Here Wakhan—a sliver of Afghan territory—separates Kashmir and Pakistan from Russia. In late 19th century this territory caused frequent dispute between Afghanistan and the expanding British and Russian Empires. Finally, Russia and Britain agreed for Afghanistan to hold the territory in order to prevent un-necessary friction between the two empires.

In Kashmir the ground rises from plains of Punjab, gently through the foot-hills for approximately twenty miles, less gently to the mountains in the north and north-east and abruptly in Gilgit and Laddakh to heights above 20,000 feet. The foot-hills are covered with wild, scruffy shrub, and the mountains with stately pines, except where deforestation has been on rampage. Mountains and rivers are the most distinctive features of Kashmir. Their situation has influenced the ethnic and cultural kinship of its people. In Gilgit there is a noticeable influence of Central Asia. South of Srinagar the attitudes are predominantly Punjabi.

In the north three mountain ranges contend for expression, the Hindu Kush, Pamir and Karakorum, breath-taking to behold, merciless to the way-farer, a nightmare to the military planner. These mountain ranges guard Kashmir against incursions from Central Asia. A few hazardous passes provide tempting challenge to the intrepid adventurer; a commodity of which Central Asia has never starved. Taimur Aqa crossed over from Burzil Pass at the age of sixty.

The rivers while in Kashmir pass through narrow gorges. Their steep banks, their crazy currents and their jutting rocks discourage commercial traffic. But their passage through these seemingly impassable mountains guides the hill roads from plains to the interior fastnesses. In 1947 there were only four roads from Punjab to Srinagar which could support motor traffic.

- (a) Guardaspur - Kathua - Jammu - Banihal Pass - Srinagar.
- (b) Sialkot - Jammu - Banihal Pass - Srinagar.
- (c) Rawalpindi-Murree-Kohala- Domel -Srinagar.
- (d) Rawalpindi - Abbottabad - Mansehra - Muzarfarabad - Srinagar

In 1947 the roads within state territory were shingle; except for a few blacktop miles in Srinagar. They were narrow, winding, barely allowing one way traffic. The

Banihal Pass gets snowbound through winter and restricts traffic. Like most obstacles its trafficability must be measured in terms of resources, determination and ingenuity of the military engineer. In addition to the above the following shingle roads influenced operations in 1947/48. For the most part these barely deserved the appellation 'jeepable' :—

- (a) Jammu-Naushera leading on to Kotli.
- (b) Naushera-Rajauri-Mendhar-Hajira -Palandri.
- (c) Punch-Uri.

The roads were perched on stilts or rickety embankments on the river side and hugged the hills on the other, taking advantage of every nuance to shy away from the river. Vehicular traffic was limited to these roads, except around hamlets where hill torrents and human hands had gouged out a few reluctant fields. Deployment of guns off the road was possible only in these places, making them conspicuous and easy for location by enemy.

From the hills on either side nullahs carry rain water or melting snow into the rivers. These nullahs and their affiliated hills render cross-country movement an endless series of ups and downs, working against the grain of the land. Apart from the above mentioned roads there were, in 1947, only mule tracks penetrating the river valleys. The width, gradient and trafficability of these tracks were nerve racking. Lateral communications between the valleys was

limited in most cases to primitive hill trails, which were frequently washed away by rain or melting snow.

There are four main rivers which influence operations in Kashmir:—

- (a) Indus - starting in Tibet - through Skardu - Bunji-and on to Attock.
- (b) Neelam - or Krishan Ganga - starting north of Sonnmarg - cutting through Tithwal Valley and flowing into Jhelum at Domel.
- (c) Jhelum - starting from Wular Lake - through Baramula - Domel - Mirpur - Mangla and Jhelum.
- (d) Chenab - starting from Kulu cutting through Kishtwar - Ramban - Akhnur and on to Gujrat.

South of line Muzaffarabad - Srinagar two rivers are of tactical interest.

- (a) Mahl - passing through Bagh - Mong Bajri it drains into Jhelum.
- (b) Punch - passing through Punch - Kotli drains into Mangla reservoir near Mirpur.

In the gorges, bridging operations are difficult as there are very few places offering toe-hold for this purpose.

Throughout Kashmir vegetation and crests restrict fields of direct fire weapons. This deficiency has to be compensated with a commensurate increase of indirect fire weapons. However, indirect fire weapons increase logistic

load. The guns have problems of crest clearance and transport. The 3 inch mortars of 1947 had range barely sufficient to spit across an average valley. Both mortars and guns find it difficult to hit targets on top of hills.

Movement along floors of valleys is under observation from surrounding hills. But troops moving in the valley or positioned on one hill can see only as far as the next hill. Stationary targets can be pinpointed from the air but moving targets can find cover and concealment within a few yards, within a few seconds. In the valleys, aircraft have short and difficult runs to locate and hit ground targets.

Of course, to the soldier operating on his feet the terrain is a maze of hills, nullahs, ravines and vegetation, defying tactical interpretation. The ground fragments attack into platoon and section actions. Troops committed in any valley or hill cannot be switched into another valley within the time frame of a particular battle.

In 1947 Srinagar was linked to Gilgit Agency by an uncertain route. The journey from Srinagar to Gilgit took approximately six weeks in fair weather. Srinagar was connected to Bandipura on Wular Lake by a shingle road. From Bandipura to Gilgit a mule track crawled through Gurais, Burzil Pass (13,775 feet), Astor, over Indus at Bunji and onto Gilgit. The political status of Gilgit was a compromise between Chinese, British and Maharaja's interests, tempered by geography.

The weather in the foot-hills is much the same as in Punjab; slightly cooler in summer and more bracing in winter. In the mountains it is comfortable in summer dropping down to sub-zero during winter. At heights between 7,000 and 10,000 feet special clothing is required during winter. At heights above 10,000 feet snow line equipment is necessary the year round.

In the foot-hills operations can be pursued throughout the year except perhaps for some break during monsoon. In the mountains the best campaigning months are May, June, September, October and November. But troops specially equipped and trained for mountain warfare can operate throughout the year giving them corresponding tactical superiority. In 1947 neither India nor Pakistan had such troops. The mountain artillery units on both sides had experience of operating in NWFP and Burma none of which included snow-shod operations.

In 1947 Pakistan did not have the strength to pursue operations in Kashmir as well as West Pakistan. However if the fighting were confined to Kashmir the terrain would balance out differentials in favour of Pakistan. In case of stalemate there was the likelihood of India extending the war into Punjab. A quick decision by Indian forces was a desirable objective if India was to give substance to Maharaja's accession.

Srinagar is the geographical and political heart of Kashmir and therefore the most desirable objective for both sides. But considering the demographic structure and political awareness of people the loss of Srinagar would mean the end of Indian occupation, whereas India would have to occupy the Jhelum river line, Muzaffarabad to Mirpur, in order to rub out Pakistan's claim.

In a Pakistan-India confrontation Kashmir confers decided strategic advantage to whichever side holds it. Considering the relative geography, India would derive a more critical advantage than Pakistan. With Kashmir in Indian hands Pakistan would be like Czechoslovakia in relation to Germany in 1938. For both Russia and China the status of Kashmir is of special interest on two accounts :—

- (a) Linking Central Asia with Indus and Ganges river systems.
- (b) A dominating role in the strategic attitudes in the Sub-continent.

The foregoing analysis is indeed hindsight; which is less useful than foresight. But if one has not been burdened with foresight it is worse than asinine to spurn hindsight as well. The decision to intervene with regular forces was, a last resort, defensive measure by Pakistan. It does not require exceptional strategic foresight to appreciate that Indian occupation of Kashmir would seriously jeopardise the security of Pakistan. In the words of General Gracey :—

"If India is not to be allowed to sit

on the doorsteps of Pakistan to the rear and on the flank, at liberty to enter at its will and pleasure..... it is imperative that the Indian Army is not allowed to advance beyond the general line Uri - Punch - Naushera."

The differential in relative strengths and Maharaja's accession allowed India to commit forces in Kashmir with flagrant abandon. On the other hand Pakistan could not plan on major offensive operations or take advantage of a tactical opportunity which might provoke India to attack Lahore-Sialkot. Our operations, therefore, were limited mainly to small unit actions designed to halt Indian forces in their tracks. This was a game hand-made for young gunners. Released from the strait-jacket of cantonment life they went to the hunt with the eagerness of newly blooded hawks.

The artillery battle in Kashmir was fought by Pakistani gunners. British officers were not permitted to cross into State territory; which injunction was obeyed to the letter; without prejudice to the spirit of the Regiment.

After initial concentration at Srinagar and Jammu, the Indian Army developed operations in brigade/ division strength along the main routes in order to give substance to the Maharaja's accession. The plan may be summarised as below:—

- (a) Advance along Srinagar - Baramula - through Jhelum valley to capture Domel - 161 Brigade.

- (b) Advance along Baramula - Handwara - through Krishen Ganga valley to capture Muzaffarabad -163 Brigade.
- (c) Advance along Srinagar - Bandipur - Gurais -Burzil Pass to capture Skardu - 'Z' Brigade.
- (d) Advance along Srinagar - Tragbal - Sonnmerg -Zojila Pass - Drass to link with Leh - 77 Brigade.
- (e) Advance along Jammu - Naushera - Rajauri -Mehndar to link with Punch - JA Division.
- (f) Advance from Naushera to capture Kotli and Mirpur - JA Division.

A subsidiary operation was launched from Uri to link up with Punch.

The Indian columns were opposed by small bodies of Azad Forces, armed with rifles, a few light machine guns and the odd mortar captured from Indians. Their command and control was based on personal affiliations rather than standard tables of organization. Communications and logistics were accordingly inadequate. They had come into being spontaneously, out of necessity for survival, against the rampaging Hindus. In spite of their handicaps they carried out many successful ambushes. The Indian columns were reduced to overly cautious advance. Whenever the Indians experimented with any degree of boldness they were quickly brought to order by a handful of Azad riflemen. The

Azad Forces thus gained valuable time and space, whereby commitment of regular forces by Pakistan was considered justifiable and did not constitute sufficient cause for India to spread the conflict into the plains of Punjab.

Guns of 1 Mountain Regiment were the first to be committed.

In March 1948 Col Milne was summoned to General Headquarters. The Director Military Operations, Brig Sher Khan met him, "Go to Punch. See if one of your famous batteries is good enough to help capture the town".

Punch was cut off from communication with the rest of Indian Army in Kashmir. Defending the town was an Indian infantry brigade supported by a mountain battery. Punch was being supplied by air. This is what Milne gathered. On return to General Headquarters he reported to Brig Morley, Director Artillery : -

"Punch has an Indian infantry brigade and a mountain battery. The garrison is entirely dependent on air supply. There is an Indian picket defending the airfield. I will need two guns to knock out the picket and another four to take care of the Indian mountain battery. Thereafter it is infantry show. I have already ordered 4 (Lahore) Battery and
section 3 (Peshawar) Battery to proceed to
Punch forthwith".

The Indian mountain battery in Punch happened to be 4 (Hazara) Battery.

4 (Lahore) Battery was commanded by Maj Gulzar. Years of active service in Frontier had given him the eyes and reactions of an experienced hunter. Maj Adalat was in overall command of guns. The gun position officer was Lt Haider Jang. He had served with 4 (Lahore) during World War II in the Irrawady crossing - Burma. His uncle had also served with 4 (Lahore). Haider Jang was unassuming, soft mouthed, intelligent. He did not fit in with 1 Mountain. He was posted to 7 Field a few months later.

Section 3 (Peshawar) was positioned on a knoll overlooking the Indian picket defending Punch airfield. At 1800 hours next evening it opened up and hit the picket with 50 rounds direct fire. At this stage 4 (Hazara) Battery near the airfield came to life and opened fire on section 3 (Peshawar). Maj Gulzar reacted with characteristic speed. It took Gulzar and his guns exactly less than two minutes to convince 4 (Hazara) about the futility of matching shots with 4 (Lahore). The Indian battery promptly ceased fire, and withdrew from the scene. It was a fitting tribute to the training imparted by Milne and the spirit of Pakistani gunners.

Next day Maj Adalat and Col Milne prepared a gun to engage Indian supply-dropping Dakotas with air-burst. As an Indian aircraft approached for supply-dropping, it was greeted by air-burst. The aircraft limped over the hills and Indian air supply sorties were considerably reduced. But the Indians recovered quickly and Punch remained in their hands. 4 (Lahore) was withdrawn to Kakul. In succeeding

months the Indians strengthened their positions on Chajja hills around Punch.

In August 1948 Brig Morley decided to deal with the nuisance with field and anti-tank guns. The field guns of course engaged the bunkers with indirect fire, which merely made the Indians further strengthen the positions.

29 Anti-Tank Battery was commanded by Maj Ghani, an officer with the build and bite of an Arabian Night 'Jallaad' (executioner). He volunteered to take one of his 6 pounders upto Chajja. One look at Ghani and Morley agreed.

In order to achieve surprise and to emplace the gun within less than a thousand yards of its targets it was decided to carry out the entire operation during hours of darkness. The Artillery School Nowshera conducted trials with a 2 pounder and a 6 pounder. The guns were taken to pieces, assembled in previously prepared bunkers and engaged targets illuminated with 2 inch mortar flares. The school recommended 2 pounder gun for the operation. Ghani, with the experience of Burma, opted for 6 pounder. Morley decided in favour of Ghani and wished him luck :—

"The gun is yours. Look after it. And yourself".

The development of gun position was carried out at night - as rehearsed - but under enemy harassing fire. The greatest difficulty was for Ghani to keep his cursing to whispers. On

the third night they were ready. At about 0100 hours the flares went up and the 6 pounder started pumping armour piercing and high explosive rounds into two of the largest bunkers. The resulting dust and smoke prevented further engagement.

The Indians retaliated with four field guns, four mountain guns and every mortar they could lay their hands on. Some direct hits were scored on the 6 pounder bunker. But the gun had two layers of logs for overhead protection in anticipation of enemy reaction. The splinters wounded Ghani and Hav Baluch Khan.

Friend and foe concluded that that was the end of Ghani and his gunners. The Indians who had abandoned Chajja reoccupied it. But Ghani had another surprise for them. The 6 pounder remained quiet throughout the night. At first light it opened up with better effect than the previous engagement. Immediately afterwards the gun was dismantled and withdrawn to a safe position, The Indians attacked the abandoned bunker. Ghani was awarded a well deserved Sitara-i-Jurat for his action.

In May 1948 Indian 163 Infantry Brigade occupied Tithwal An Azad company had been delaying Indian advance from Nathi-Chana Gali to Tithwal. At Kakul Col Milne assembled the officers of 1 Mountain and addressed them in two sentences :—

"The most white-livered is Indian officer.
Who is more white-livered" ?

سب سے بزرگ ہندوستان کا آفیسر
 اس سے زیادہ کس کا آفیسر

No one answered. But everyone felt the barb turn in his bowels.

Capt Iqbal Ahmad and Lt Rao Farman were ordered to take 2 (Royal) Kohat Mountain Battery into the Krishen Ganga Valley and engage the Indians. The battery was placed in support of 10 Infantry Brigade commanded by Brig Haji Iftikhar Ahmed. Farman is a tall handsome Rajput, seldom excited by crises, always wearing an amused smile, reducing crises to its manageable proportions.

The Indian 163 Infantry Brigade had occupied Tithwal by 23 May.

2 Mountain Battery was ordered to move on 26 May. It reached Muzaffarabad by motor transport at 2100 hours, gobbled a hasty meal, and off into the Krishen Ganga Valley. The nightmare which was supposed to be the Krishen Ganga track in 1947/48 may be understood only by those who experienced it. The track was barely wide for native emaciated animals and resented trespass by chunky mountain artillery mules loaded with ordnance. In several places it was scoured out of sheer rock, with little purchase above or below, where razor sharp projections could be avoided only at cost of going over the precipice into the angry Krishen Ganga, roaring like a hungry mythological monster. And during dark the roar of the river was exaggerated and the

chasm seemed bottomless. At one point a mule disappeared. No one heard it fall, or its death cry. Fortunately only a wheel was lost. At dawn the battery was caught by Indian aircraft. But the plane was handicapped by narrowness of the valley and serpentine nature of the track. The ill-will of Krishen Ganga was not all one sided. The battery lost only one mule.

Capt Iqbal and Lt Farman went forward to reconnoitre gun position in Nausehri, about four miles short of Tithwal. The Indians were in occupation of high ground overlooking Nausehri and our reconnaissance party had the problem of finding a gun position within range of Indians and secure from enemy observation. There was no such place. The Indians had advantage of 6,000 feet of height. Farman saw two huge boulders, some twenty feet high, near Nausada nullah. He decided to deploy his guns in the shelter of the boulders. It began to rain and both mules and drivers became nervous as they climbed up the track from the river. A mule carrying a gun barrel slipped. In the dark the gun havildar thought that the mule had disappeared into the river. Choking with anger he shouted at Farman

"What kind of gunners are we without gun barrel"?

Farman was new to the battery, but he got the point. The barrel was recovered. Next morning the battery opened fire in the general direction of the Indians.

This was to inform friend and foe alike that 1 Mountain Regiment Royal Pakistan Artillery had come into action. The effect on both sides was salutary. The Indian position on point 7229 was a thorn in the side of 10 Brigade. Lt Col Nausherwan (4/16 Punjab) was ordered to eliminate it.

Lt Farman appreciated that indirect fire by four 3.7 inch howitzers was not the recipe for routing Indians out of their bunkers. Two thousand feet above Indian positions was a cone shaped feature (Chunj) unoccupied by either side as it seemed unscaleable. Farman decided to take one gun 'up there', and engage Indian positions with direct fire. The mules of course were not convinced, and the gun and ammunition had to be carried by manpower. It was a tortuous, unforgettable climb, hand over slippery foot. But they got the gun and two hundred rounds 'up there'. They were rewarded with the sight of the target one thousand yards away, two thousand feet below. And that posed another problem. Neither the gun nor its range tables were designed for engagement of such targets with direct fire. Farman was advised by older hands to try charge I, indirect fire, which took them back to square one, which recalled Col Milne's whiplash. Farman had the gun wheels dug down, the trail lifted up and tied to two trees, and got the required angle of site for direct fire.

The Indians were surprised, as were our own infantry. The first Indian positions were over-run without opposition. Six dazed Madrassis staggered out of the position. They thought they had been hit by heavy bombers. It was not a joke.

By now all the four guns were engaging enemy position. They were, of course, widely separated; one at Chunj, one at Nausada and two at Mussargutte. Farman had arranged for triple communications; radio, line and helio. Just before 'H' hour the radio and line gave out.

Sitting near the gun position at Chunj, Farman had a perfect view of the objective. He saw some of our own infantry moving towards the second objective (D 2). Farman stopped artillery fire for fear of hitting own troops. Col Nausherwan sitting next to Farman asked, 'Why' ? Farman said, "I see some of our own troops in the target area. I will not fire unless you order me to do so". The company commander said that none of his men were in the target area. Col. Nausherwan addressed Farman, "I order you to fire". Farman shouted 'Fire' and the round killed three of our infantry. Thereafter the Indian machine-gunner who had run away returned to his gun, and did excellent work for his army. Farman tried his level best to hit the machine gun with direct fire but at that range the rounds went 'just' plus or minus. Farman then stopped firing hoping the ploy would tempt the Indian machine-gunner to join the rest of his party. It worked, and the objective was captured without much trouble.

Two more times the gun was man-carried to Kai and Kafir Khan (11,900 feet) from where it engaged enemy

positions with direct fire. At last the Sikhs paid 2(Kohat)Battery their characteristic compliment.

اوئے ایس مان فوں حق تھے بنایا ہو یا بھے
جھٹے جاندے اوتال لے جاندے او

"Oye, this your mother you have made a hookah ?
Where-ever you move, you trail it along."

But 2 (Kohat) Battery named their gun 'shahzadi', (princess).

In June the Indians linked Rajaouri through Mehndar with Punch, which necessitated reaction from Pakistan.

Lt Chishti - 2 Field Regiment 7 Battery - was ordered to take his troop to Mirpur. Moving during dark they reached Mirpur at about midnight, where they were ordered to Tandar. The troop arrived at Tandar at 4 AM, was received by Capt Shah Mohammad and was quickly deployed in a nullah which was the only place relatively secure from hostile air. The following day Maj M. J. Kiani visited. He chewed up Chishti for deploying guns where they would be washed away by hill torrent. Chishti held his ground, and won. A week later Lt Mukhtar Karim joined up with the second troop.

Anti-aircraft protection was provided by four 40 millimetre Bofors and two 20 millimetre Oerlikons. The troop commander seemed unaware of hostile air. He deployed the guns in a temptingly open bit of space, and did not bother

much about camouflage. One day two Indian fighters flew low over the area. The anti-aircraft guns opened up without hitting anything. One Oerlikon had a stoppage and the crew ran to a nearby hut where they and the aerial bomb arrived simultaneously. The Indian fighters were followed by an air observer who set out to engage the anti-aircraft guns with 25 pounders. He damaged one 40 millimetre. The Indian gun position officer enquired from the pilot if he could spot any field guns. 'Negative'. Chishti rendered a prayer.

On 3 July Capt Shah Mohammad went to Tain feature as observer. He reported some kind of 'mela' on Jhangar Dhramsal football ground. It seemed that the Indian 50 (Para) Brigade were celebrating capture of Jhangar. Shah Mohammad sent some five hundred rounds to the celebrating Indians. The brigade commander - Usman - was among those killed by the shelling. Usman was stationed in Quetta in August 1947. Before his departure for India he said, "I will over-run Pakistan with just one Indian Brigade".

Chishti, anticipating Indian reaction to our shelling, requested permission to move to alternative position during the night. Permission was granted, grudgingly, by 4 O'clock next morning. The battery was still on move when an Indian fighter emerged from behind the hills. He spotted the last vehicle, a jeep carrying Lt Chishti, BHM Fateh Khan, driver Bostan and signaller Nawaz. They jumped off the vehicle and flattened themselves on the side of the road. The jeep was hit and caught fire. The Indian fighter

dropped two 500 pounders on its second run, was satisfied with the kill, and flew back doing victory rolls. The burning jeep saved eight guns.

One afternoon some of the wagon line personnel requested permission to visit the gun position. They had tea and swapped yarns with the gun teams. Who was to know it would be their last yarns. On their way back the vehicle was hit by a solitary Indian shell. The shell had their names on it.

When the battery returned to Rawalpindi there was a court of enquiry in respect of Lt Chishti, "To enquire into circumstances whereby government property was damaged". Chishti is a robust Punjabi who would walk through an earthquake as if on a golf course. Throughout his service he never adjusted his intellectual honesty according to the other man's epaulettes. The court of enquiry made no impression on him.

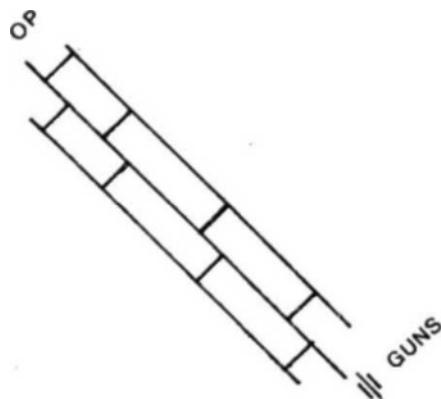
7 Battery was replaced by 9 Field Battery. Maj Shah Mohammad, newly promoted to command 9 Battery, was called up by Brig Azam Khan :—

"The Indians are planning to link up Punch via Kotli. They have to clear 1/16 Punjab sitting on Tain. What can you do to help 1/16"?

Shah Mohammad's arithmetic showed that the guns would have to be moved 10,000 yards ahead of Mirpur to give adequate support to 1/16 Punjab. Four guns (Able Troop) were dismantled, 1/16 Punjab and 1/13 Frontier Force helped haul the guns 10,000 yards over primitive hill trails. The operation took four nights. Capt Haider Jang,

observer, was shaving early one morning when he heard gun fire. The Indian attack on Tain had started. Haider Jang gave a rough grid reference and hurried to the observation post, half shaved. He was in time to adjust the third salvo. The Indians were surprised. They had been greeted by artillery fire where they expected assorted dissidents armed with muzzle loaders. For some time they persisted. Haider Jang's methodical punishment persuaded them to try the thing elsewhere.

One factor contributing to Haider Jang's success was the security of his line communication with guns. The line had been subject to frequent interruption due to enemy shelling and friendly attention. Haider Jang established a grid of telephone cable which survived interference from both directions. (See figure)



In February 1948, 4 Mountain Battery was moved to Rawalpindi. Capt 'Gerry Timms' was incharge. One morning Timms was summoned by Brig Crawford.

"Gerry have you been an Ack - Ack gunner" ?

"No, sir".

"You are one now. Take a 40 millimetre from the anti-aircraft battery and deploy it to defend Kohala bridge".

Timms led the gun to Kohala, learning anti-aircraft gunnery from the subedar, enroute. They arrived on scene at 1230 hours.

Kohala means circle of hills. It is most aptly named. The valley is perhaps a hundred yards wide and the bridge is a difficult target for hostile aircraft. The place is equally difficult for siting anti-aircraft guns. The only suitable place with a reasonable field of fire is a small knoll immediately on the near bank of Jhelum river. Timms sited the gun like a true gunner—with a view to hitting the target. But he forgot that whereas mountain guns are used to mules the 40 millimetre Bofors resent horse-play. The inconvenience was pointed out by the subedar. Timms merely said, "We will make a track". By 1600 hours the gun was in position, dug down, camouflaged and ready to fire.

When Crawford saw Timms next morning he shouted,
"What the hell.....weren't you ordered to deploy
an A A gun for defence of Kohala bridge" ?

"It is there, sir".

Crawford drove straight to Kohala. When Timms saw him next Crawford was all smiles.

In March 1948, 4 Mountain Battery was moved to Abbottabad, ordered to mechanise, involving conversion of some mule drivers to handle mechanised transport. The results were rather a strain on vehicles. But no one could complain that these drivers lacked determination, or ever failed to get the guns wherever wanted.

In the meantime, Timms carried out reconnaissance of observation posts and gun positions in Chinari area. The battery was affiliated to 10 Brigade (Haji Iftikhar). Timms requested permission to move into Jhelum valley by night, engage targets and be back in Abbottabad by day-break. Brig Haji said, 'No*. Timms went to Maj Gen Tottenham, General Officer Commanding 7 Division. The general gave Timms a couple of drinks, soothed him and said, "You will get your chance. But not just yet".

In Chakothi, Capt Rabbani 4/16 Punjab, a brave, hot-blooded officer fell into the Jhelum river. In those days the crossing was made by means of a basket drawn by ropes and pulleys. The basket had been turned loose and Rabbani decided to do monkey crawl. The frayed rope cut his hands and fifty feet short of safety his strength gave out. His commanding officer, Lt Col Nowsherwan, wept - so did the gunners of 4 Battery who knew him.

Nowsherwan was a pockmarked, swarthy, hunch shouldered, forbidding personality. But he could deliver prickly barbs with ingenuous Punjabi humour. In 1950 when in command of 16 Punjab Regimental Centre he complained

to the local dairy farm about the quality of milk. The letter read something like this

"It has been brought to my notice that water and milk are issued to this unit daily in the same receptacle. It is recommended that the two items may please be issued separately on separate days and this unit informed accordingly. This procedure will save government transport in unnecessary haulage of water as this item is obtainable in sufficient quantity in unit bathrooms".

The dairy farm did not appreciate the logic, or the humour.

In May 1948 4 Mountain Battery, less guns and animals, was ordered to move via Panjar, Pulandri, Hajira to Daurandi in Punch sector. The guns and animals were to be taken over in Daurandi. At Pulandri was located a supply depot with Capt Nizam-ud-Din incharge. Nizam and Timms had served together in Burma. Before leaving Panjar at 0430 hours Timms rang up Nizam to have a hot meal ready for the battery at 1100 hours. Nizam laughed, "Twenty miles in this country in six hours" ! At 1115 hours Timms approached the camp leading his battery.

Standing next to Nizam was what looked like a British officer camouflaged in blue check shirt, blue shorts and plimsolls. He said, "By God—they did it". He was General Gracey. When introduced, Timms got tongue tied. Gracey's

handshake put him at ease. 4 Battery arrived in Daurandi just in time to engage Indian guns coming into action opposite Chajjah feature. The hard march across country paid off.

In June the battery was ordered to move to Pir Kanthi to deal with Indian attack. The attack was already in progress when 4 Battery arrived on the scene. Timms immediately engaged the enemy with direct fire from one gun. An Indian machine-gun and its detachment were blown to bits. The success signal they had sent up appeared rather premature. Before the Indians recovered, Timms withdrew the gun.

At Chapri, Capt Timms was rewarded by a rare sight —a laughing Col Milne. But Milne's laughter was genuine. His guns had done their job.

The battery moved to Bagh.

On the evening of 13 September, Capt Shaukat turned up with survey troop to fix observation posts, gun positions and targets. It was getting dark and the men were having their meals. Since it was too late to carry out survey, Timms took the party to a wagon-line bunker for their evening meal. As the survey officer sat down to eat he heard sound of men weeping coming from a corner of the bunker. These were about half a dozen gunners. A havildar was coaxing them to eat, but the men would not budge.

After the meal Shaukat took Timms outside the bunker and asked, "Why are these chaps weeping" ?

Timms : You know the Indians over-ran Hyderabad today. In celebration they fired their guns all over Kashmir. Our share was one hundred rounds. One of the rounds landed between the trail of gun of this detachment.

Shaukat: Any one got killed ?

Timms : No.

Shaukat: Why are they weeping then ?

Timms : Because the gun got damaged.

The battery got its revenge two days later. There was a Sikh observation post which was responsible for damaging their gun. Timms deployed one gun to engage the observation post with direct fire. In the morning, as the enemy was getting ready for breakfast they were greeted with five rounds from 4 Battery. The enemy did not get any breakfast that morning and some of them never thereafter.

In Jhelum valley Indian 161 Brigade had advanced as far as Uri. The brigade had eleven battalions. In November 1947 a column was despatched from Uri to link up with Punch. The column was ambushed and severely punished by Azad Forces, north of Haji Pir Pass. Thereafter, 161 Brigade did not try out the Uri-Punch link.

The Indian summer offensive in Jhelum valley started in May 1948. By middle June they had captured Pandu and

Chota Kazi Nag. With Indians sitting on Pandu our positions in Chinari-Chakothi became precarious. Brig Akbar Khan decided to evict Indians out of Pandu. The attack was made by 4/10 Baluch and Azad Forces, supported by following artillery units:—

3 (Peshawar) Mountain Battery	2 guns
6 Field Battery	4 guns
22 Field Battery	4 guns
Medium Battery	2 guns
Anti-Aircraft	4 guns

3 Mountain Battery was commanded by Maj Shami who was also the local commander artillery. After transfer from 3 (SP) he had not taken long to transform from a gentleman field gunner to a hard-mouthing mountain gunner.

Able Troop 2 Field was deployed in a nullah just short of Chakothi On way to this troop was a stretch of road under observed hostile artillery fire, and the Indians played the game according to Shami's rules. Whenever anything appeared on the scene it was chased by shrieking shells from one end to the other. Shami used to initiate new arrivals on this run. Came the turn of Lt Badshah. When the first salvo landed at their tail. Shami said, "Before a shell gets to you it has to have your name written on it". The two officers walked through the gauntlet.

In August 1948 Charlie Troop 3 (SP) Field took over Chakothi position. The location was known to Indians and

whenever the troop opened fire there was prompt retaliation. The guns, however, were well protected by terrain, except for number 4, which was slightly exposed and got the worst of exchange. In order to break the monotony the gun position officer, Lt Atta Malik, used to let off a few rounds immediately before last light, "To make Indians waste ammunition". On one such occasion, a shell splinter got into the layer's shoulder (L/Nk Mohammad Khan). The gun havildar applied first aid and ordered the layer to leave the gun. Mohammad Khan said, "Not until the gun positon officer orders, 'Stand Easy'". For his gallantry Mohammad Khan was presented a wrist watch by Miss Fatima Jinnah.

The field, medium and anti-aircraft guns, in Chinari were equally well sited, and camouflaged. Indian aircraft visited twice, three times a day, strafing, bombing and rocketing suspected gun positions. Nothing was hit.

The section of medium guns was commanded by Capt Ihsan-ul-Haq Malik. He was adjutant 8 Medium, Lt Col Wasi-ud-Din rang up from Kakul, "Send a troop to Muzaffarabad. Detail a good captain". Ihsan detailed himself. When he returned to Peshawar after Pandu operation Wasi was furious, "So you think you are the best bloody captain round here"?

"No sir".

Wasi relaxed.

Ihsan took Lt Ashraf along. He was nick-named 'Kala-Deo' — black giant, which was quite in keeping with his

appearance on dark nights. In daylight however, Ashraf was a lovable character and a favourite of his men. And day or night he was a steadfast gunner.

In late March 1948.8 Medium Regiment was encamped in Nowshera ranges for course shooting. One morning Lt Col 'George' Milne dropped in for breakfast. He had just returned from a trip into Kashmir. All the officers crowded around Milne to get some news of the fighting. Deliberately, in a scathing tone 'George' said, "You chaps yak too much". Capt Khadim immediately volunteered to go into Kashmir. He proceeded to Murree where he was directed to 101 Brigade in village Sawan Kucha. A Mahsud lashkar, with some 800 rifles, was entrusted to his care. They moved to Resbian Gali. The Mahsuds offered to buy Khadim's binoculars and carbine. Khadim expressed his inability to trade government property and was rewarded with mischievous smiles. The lashkar stayed in Resbian Gali until the Indian summer offensive petered out. In the meantime, Delta Troop 8 Medium, arrived in the area and Khadim claiming precedence, took over from Capt Ihsan.

Maj Sheikh Mohammad Aslam reported to 2 Field in May 1948, to take over 6 Field Battery. He was informed that 'Able' Troop with Lt Akhtar Abdul Rahman had already left for Garni Habib-ullah. In the last week of May the troop moved into temporary position at Sawan Kucha, 25 miles ahead of Muzaffarabad. The move had to be carried out at

night, without lights of any kind. During a subsequent night the troop was moved forward to engage enemy bunkers on forward slopes of Pandu ridge with direct fire. The enemy retaliated with indirect fire for almost two hours. The Indian retaliation disrupted line communication but inflicted no casualties. It was gratuitous battle inoculation for Rahman and his men.

One evening Rahman was having tea with Maj Adalat at Chinari when at 2000 hours Adalat was called to telephone. The Indians were about to attack 1/13 Frontier Force positions on Kupra Kupi. An artillery observer was to be detailed for support of 1/13 Frontier Force. Rahman got the job. It was his first experience as observer in battle. Naturally he was excited, and hurried to keep the appointment. Stumbling through pitch dark the party reached forward localities just before first light. While being refreshed with tea, Rahman realised to his horror that in his excitement he had forgotton the line laying party. He prayed, silently, suppressing his chagrin, forcing the scalding tea down his reluctant throat, maintaining innocuous conversation. Some half hour later his signal NCO appeared on the scene, "Saab, where do I put your telephone" ?

Rahman thanked God for such priceless soldiers. The Indian attack did not come off.

A few days later Rahman was put in support of 4/10 Baluch at Bib Dori. An Indian animal transport column was moving from Pandu peak to Pandu village.

Rahman moved one gun to a roving position and started engaging the animal transport column. The Indians retaliated with a battery. Rahman's gunners worked out a drill, firing their gun between enemy salvos. The gun team became a darling of Baluchis and Havildar Amin was recognised for his gallantry.

The key part of the plan for dislodging Indian positions on Pandu consisted of moving 4/10 Baluch behind enemy lines and attacking Pandu from almost rear. It was appreciated that the capture of Pandu peak and Pandu village would unhinge the Indian defensive position in the area. The move of the striking force was to be carried out over difficult country during hours of darkness. But the geography could not be wished away and the Indian position left little choice except for moving during hours of darkness.

Maj Sheikh Aslam was appointed artillery adviser to 101 Brigade. He managed to push his advice as far as Maj Ishaque, the brigade major. Aslam is a happy warrior. Fair, laughing grey eyes, he would come up with a joke in the midst of shelling, reducing fear to a dried up hollow pumpkin. The brigade commander missed quite an experience.

Shami decided to accompany Lt Col Malik Sher Bahadar during the attack. 4/10 Baluch and one company 17 Baluch under Lt Col Sher Bahadar was to concentrate in Kotla Rajkhwah during the first night. It was to stay concealed during the day and next night move in two columns to capture Pandu village.

The move to Kotla Rajkhwah was carried out without incident. In the morning it was discovered that a civilian guide had disappeared. There were apprehensions that the plan may have been jeopardised. Col Sher Bahadar accepted the risk and that night the force split into two columns, each moving towards its objective.

The right hand column under Maj Afzali reached Pandu peak without incident. This column had Lt Malik Khan Zaman (8 Medium) as forward observer. It is to the credit of Khan Zaman and his signallers that throughout the battle his communication with 8 Medium guns remained functioning. In fact these were the only communications through which the brigade commander remained in touch with the attacking force. When the enemy became aware of 4/10 Baluch on Pandu peak, on morning of 21 July, he put in a hurried counter-attack. He was quickly dissuaded from further effort by Lt Khan Zaman's medium shells.

The left column reached in front of Pandu village and formed up for assault when enemy opened up with everything. The forward observer Lt Rahman found his signal operator killed by a tree burst. The line had already been cut. He managed to climb to Pandu peak and tie in with Khan Zaman's line. But this lasted for less than one shoot. Col Sher Bahadar decided to attack Pandu village from the direction of Pandu peak. At 1600 hours the same day this force was ordered to move back to Kuthai nullah and reorganise. Maj Shami and Lt Rahman remained in

vicinity of Pandu village trying as best as they could to engage opportunity targets, misleading the enemy about the move of our troops to Kuthai nullah. During the night Shami and Rahman scrambled and slithered down to Kuthai nullah to join Col Sher Bahadar and party. The infantry was surprised to see them alive, but fed them and asked them if they would care to come along for attack on Pandu village.

"Of course".

They reached Pandu peak in the evening. During the night they prepared for attack on Pandu village. They were fed and rested.

In the meantime, the Azad Forces had been moving around the area ambushing Indian patrols. The Indians were very nervous about the ambushes. On 19 June 4 Kumaon lost 13 killed and 3 wounded including their commanding officer. Lt Khan Zaman had been adding to Indian injuries with well directed fire from medium guns. When Col Sher Bahadar's party attacked Pandu village there was no one there. The Indians lost 9 officers and 375 other ranks in this action.

In late August survey troop from 13 Survey Battery arrived in Chinari. While surveying targets from trigonometrical points on Pandu the surveyors saw Uri with tents and vehicles temptingly laid out.

Too tempting to be left untouched. Of course Maj Shami, Maj Aslam and Capt Khadim were willing to hit Uri. But the guns were out of range from their position in Chinari. The only place from where medium guns, with a little help from wind, could reach Uri was from the vicinity of our forward localities. But who in his right mind would deploy medium guns within range of enemy mortars; particularly when Pakistan had only sixteen such guns.

This was not the only problem.

On way to the forward localities there was one mile stretch of road under enemy observation and artillery fire. Also there were two bridges which would not take the gun and its tractor simultaneously.

The problems were resolved.

The data from target to gun position was worked out from trigonometrical point on Pandu. The gun position was selected at the foot of a low hill in the forward localities. There was room only for one gun. The gun pit, ammunition pit and shelter for detachment were dug, provided with overhead cover and camouflaged during two nights. On third night the gun was slowly towed to forward position, keeping engine noise to minimum, its detachment leading the vehicle. At each bridge sufficient men had been detailed to unhook the gun, man-handle it across and hook-in at the other end. One hundred rounds of ammunition were carried forward by manpower.

Meteorological data for predicted fire was provided by survey troop. In order to condition enemy observers to meteorological balloons, observations were regularly taken at 0800 and 1400 hours daily, for seven days prior to bombardment. On D-day the bombardment started at 1400 hours as the enemy watched the balloon go up. Predicted data had been worked out from observations of previous seven days. In half an hour one hundred rounds were fired on targets at Uri.

It had been appreciated that Indian fighters would retaliate within the hour, long before which time the medium gun had stopped firing, and the gun expertly camouflaged. Capt Bangash had made appropriate arrangements to greet the Indians. The Oerlikons at Chakothi 40 millimetre guns at Chinari and all machine guns in the area had been prepared to engage hostile aircraft. At about 1500 hours two Indian fighters appeared on the scene and started strafing and rocketing the area between Chinari and Chakothi. One aircraft was damaged and thereafter Indian field guns started harassing the area. The harassing fire continued throughout that day and night and the next day. Towards the second night there was some respite. Capt Khadim and his team ran the gauntlet back to Chinari, safely.

In the shelling of Uri Pakistani gunners demonstrated daring as well as skill. For the first time in ' their experience, mountain, field, medium, anti-aircraft gunners and surveyors worked as a well-knit team without any

super-imposed headquarters. It was an inspiring demonstration.

In spite of an undertaking given in both Governments to United Nations to refrain from aggressive action India tried to secure decision by military means. Pakistan had, therefore, to persuade India about advisability of accepting U.N. intervention. Towards this purpose it was decided to cut Indian line of communication between Akhnur and Naushera in the vicinity of Beri Pattan. 14 Para Brigade (Sher Ali) and 10 Brigade (Haji Iftikhar) were detailed for the mission. Artillery support consisted of the following units :—

4 Field Regiment with 6 Battery from	—	24 guns
2 Field Regiment	—	
7 Field Regiment	—	24 guns
8 Medium Regiment, less battery	—	8 guns
5 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, section from 12 Battery	—	2 guns
6 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment troop	—	4 guns
29 Anti-Tank Battery	—	12 guns
13 Survey Battery less sound ranging troop.		

In November 1948, 6 Field Battery (Maj Aslam) was sent to Bhimber in support of 6/13 Frontier Force -Lt Col Bakhtiar Rana. For quite some time there was no activity and the men got restless. Aslam suggested to Rana the shelling of Chamb. Rana added a bit of raid by Azad

Forces and some sawars from Probys Horse. The shelling was carried out from temporary positions an hour before last light. The guns were then withdrawn and dummies substituted in their place. Next morning two Indian Fury aircraft came in to attack the dummy position. The target was indicated by Indian Artillery with red smoke. There was some miscalculation and a canister hit the aircraft just as it was diving in for attack. The plane exploded. From its remains it appeared that the pilot was a Sikh.

Shortly afterwards Maj Aslam was detailed to select suitable areas for deployment of guns. He was accompanied by Capt Shirin, battery commander 13 Survey and Capt Ajaib. Two gun areas were selected. One in Babot and the other short of Chinaka. Both areas were sheltered from enemy ground observation by conveniently located hills, which also provided observation over the target area.

The trouble, of course, was lack of suitable tracks to get the guns into position, particularly in respect of Babot. A precarious hill track, barely jeepable in dry weather, connected Lakar Mandi with Babot. Fortunately for artillery there was a most dedicated engineer officer (Capt Safdar) incharge of road building. Safdar was made of sun-dried cow-hide stretched over wire fence, cured by nicotine and buckets of coppery tea. Working only at night a track for guns was hacked out of the hill side in four nights. The guns had to be in position by 5 December. On 30 November

the track was half washed away by rains, the other half was not fit for mules. Safdar got his second wind. On 3 December, Col Jamil Farooqui (Commander Engineers 7 Division) visited the site. He was accompanied by an Englishman in civilian clothes. Farooqui enquired from Capt Abid (5 HAA) if the track would take his guns. Abid said 'Surely'. The Englishman expressed doubt. Abid ignored him. The man said, "I am sorry we have not been introduced. I am General Tottenham. I happen to be the General Officer Commanding here". Abid stuttered, "Sorry sir, but I still believe that the guns will be in position on time". Safdar and Abid had been class mates. And Safdar made sure that Abid kept his word.

But before the track was ready units were ordered to send officers for selection of gun positions. No vehicle was to proceed beyond Lakar Mandi. Capt Abid however had a bad knee and crept out on his jeep early morning. Near his wagon lines he was stopped and a number of artillery officers stacked themselves into the jeep. At Babot Abid acquired Capt Shirin and Capt Ehsan, making a total of nine passengers. On way back, near Bhimber, they were stopped by a platoon of infantry, stretched across the road, nervous fingers curled around triggers. The platoon commander escorted them to the area commander. He was Lt Col Bakhtiar Rana a Rajput from Hoshiarpur with the scowl of a ruffled cougar and the pearly smile of a well nourished Punjabi Jat. Col Rana was not smiling. He gave the visitors the benefit of his choice Rajput vocabulary. Afterwards

he took them to the mess dugout where a table, stretched across the entire length, was stacked with succulent meats. Rana told Shirin, "You know how short we are of artillery officers and here are nine of you in one jeep, daring Indian Air Force to get at you. Bad".

Shirin thanked him.

Rana continued, "Another thing. Whenever you pass through here you must stop for refreshment. That is an order. Otherwise you will be brought here under arrest".

Shirin thanked again.

Col Rana said, "I have been through battles in North Africa and Italy for four years. I know the gunners take us to the objective and help us stay there".

Shirin Dil (sweet heart) is a sweet spoken, hard driving, Niazi Pathan from Hangu (Kohat). He had gone to his village (Togh Sarai) for the 'chelum' of his wife. The day after his arrival, late afternoon, some village boys came panting — "Army guests". This was of course the local way of politely informing Shirin that a military posse, armed to the teeth, had come for him. The officer incharge told Shirin that he had to take his battery into Kashmir.

It would have been impolite to resent the escort. Shirin arrived in Peshawar late at night and was informed that the

orders had been cancelled. Next morning was Eid and as Shirin came out of unit mosque Lt Col Southey wished him, "Happy Eid". Also the orders had been changed once again. The battery had to go to Mirpur, report to the local commander artillery, Maj Aslam (2 Field). As the battery was about to occupy battle position it was ordered, "Out, go to Assar". Shirin rested the battery for twenty four hours. It had been on the move for four days running. At Babot Shirin caught up with Abid.

Shirin's battery was to deploy six guns in Babot and two south of Chinaka. Capt Ihsan was command post officer in Babot and Capt Khadim in command of guns in Chinaka. The gun positions were something of a marvel. Guns had to be emplaced by winch. For good reason. They were difficult to spot and even more difficult to hit.

Maj Muzaffar, second-in-command 7 Field, was the senior most Pakistani artillery officer. He was called to General Headquarters to take over command of 1 Mountain. At Rawalpindi he was ordered, "Go to Assar. Coordinate deployment of guns in Babot".

On night 4/5 December, Lts Matin, Naqi and 'Tubby' Hassan were leading their guns up the slippery track Lakar Mandi - Babot when they heard an explosion a short distance away. It was their first time in action and the explosion was real close. All three jumped out of their vehicles and went into the muddy ground.

After a while Hassan got tired of rubbing his Lahori nose in Kashmiri mud. He shouted, "What the hell is going on" ? f

"Stay back. We are blasting rock".

"How far is the enemy" ?

Laughter.

Our infantry helped in preparing gun positions. By morning 5 December the guns were in position, dug in, camouflaged, omnibus lines laid, command posts keyed up with target data, the gunners rested, relaxed and ready for excitement.

For his two 3.7 inch heavy anti-aircraft guns Abid found some space which none of the field gunners wanted. In those days field gunners did not particularly desire association with anti-aircraft gunners.

But before the guns were brought into position 13 Survey Battery had deployed two troops to get guns, observation posts and targets on theatre grid. Two flash spotting bases were deployed; one in Babot and the other around Ambargarh Fort. Capt Ajaib and Lt Pasand were incharge at Babot and Capt Sami at Ambargarh Fort. Theatre grid had to be brought forward from Gujrat to Bhimber and Assar and from there on through guns, observation posts and targets. The whole exercise involving survey over an area fifty miles by fifty. Forward of gun positions all movement had to be on foot. But the work was completed within six days. While

carrying the grid forward from Gujrat one observer pair had to get on top of a high building. The locals looked at their theodolite and tripod with ill-concealed suspicion. The police were informed. The surveyors patiently explained the purpose of their work. The gathering tried to undo their former hostility with overwhelming hospitality. Some hours passed before the pair could resume work.

Guns of 29 Anti-Tank Battery were deployed between Bhimber and Assar, in suicidal positions; the guns had to kill or get killed. Two of the guns were taken by Capt Fardy to defend a gap in front of Ambargarh Fort, almost daring Indian tanks to come.

The fire plan for engagement of targets was prepared by Lt Col Southey, commanding officer 8 Medium Regiment.

It was quixotic to hope that Indians would remain blissfully ignorant of our activity. From 6 to 13 December Indian fighter aircraft flew reconnaissance missions over the area. After their first mission they could not have failed to notice the tell-tale track Lakar Mandi - Babot. Why they continued their reconnaissance for six days may be attributable to lack of belief in air-photos or some technical hitch. Occasionally the fighters would rocket Ambargarh Fort or strafe at random to provoke reaction.

On 14 December Lt Matin had his breakfast at the easy hour of 0800 and strolled over to his command

post. He had barely got in when shells screamed overhead and landed near medium battery position in the rear. The next salvo landed in Matin's area. Tannoy cables were cut and a gun slightly damaged. The gunners watched Matin expecting orders to retaliate. There were no orders.

A red smoke canister landed in the area to indicate target to Indian fighters. Signal Havildar Hussain Ahmed, who was repairing tannoy cables, assisted by technical assistant Badar Din quickly smothered the red smoke. Lt Naqi, command post officer 11 Field Battery, anticipating Indian air strike, fired two red smoke shells about three thousand yards away from the gun position. Within minutes Indian Fighters appeared on the scene and engaged red smoke with all their armaments.

The gunners became impatient.

We had no means to photograph Indian gun positions. But the flash spotting bases deployed by 13 Survey Battery quickly worked out location of Indian guns and passed the data to our command posts. An Indian observer plane appeared on the scene. Lt Col Southey ordered guns to open up. The gun position officers shouted, "Troop Target".

It was like an electric current animating neon signs. The anti-aircraft guns came to life. A splinter took the Indian plane in its wing and carried it over the line to enemy side. The air observer was followed by Indian fighters who were

less audacious than their predecessors. When a second aircraft was damaged they lost enthusiasm.

Indian shells in 8 Medium area had cut tannoy cables and wounded Lt Ghulam Farid, the gun position officer. Ihsan picked up a megaphone, stood outside the command post where the gunners could see him, and started fire orders in his sturdy voice, in steady measured bursts, as if on gun drill. In early 1960's some of our general officers objected to gunners shouting fire-orders with rather 'brazen' pitch. They should have seen the effect of Ihsan's voice on our gun detachments in the midst of hostile shelling.

General Tottenham rang up Col Southey. "What is all the bloody noise about" ?

Southey : "It is a shooting match. The Indians started it".

Tottenham: "You might at least try and hit them".

Capt Shirin manning an observation post saw a large convoy of vehicles crossing Beri Pattan bridge from Akhnur towards Naushera at about 1300 hours. This was normal routine for Indian convoys. When the last vehicle was well across the bridge he put two medium shells in front of the convoy. The vehicles halted. For two hours Shirin pounded the area with his medium battery. There was chaos as the first shells landed on the stranded vehicles. The bridge was

hit and there was no way the vehicles could get off the road into some shelter. In the camp around the bridge a petrol dump was hit and the fire spread to the camp. Next morning at 0830 hours Shirin started punishing the camp for the second time, hitting the bridge and an ammunition dump.

Two days later Shirin received a letter from his father. Shirin's son had died in his absence. But his grief was softened by the success of his mission. And later Allah blessed Shirin with four exuberant sons.

Near Ambargarh Fort, Shahzada Bahr-e-Karam (Swati Prince) established 4 Field observation post. Bahr-e-Karam was a delightful character. In his first annual confidential report in the column for 'hobbies' he wrote, "rumour mongering". The commanding officer was furious, but Bahr-e-Karam stuck to his hobby. From his observation post Bahr-e-Karam could see Naushera, the targets invitingly open, but frustratingly out of range of field and medium guns. Bahr-e-Karam had Lt Ashraf (8 Medium) for company. While Bahr-e-Karam was working out target data Ashraf got on to heavy anti-aircraft guns and requested engagement of Naushera. Capt Abid requested permission from Brig Crawford. Soon afterwards Ashraf started fire orders on omnibus line. In the middle of fire orders Brig Sher Ali's voice crept in. Ashraf used artillery language to clear the line for fire orders. The brigadier appreciated the language. The rounds landed on corps headquarters in Naushera rest house and our field

gunners almost embraced Abid, forgetting his anti-aircraft origin.

On 27 December a fighting patrol from 5/13 Frontier Force was sent to obtain information about Indian positions (Salma-Mate). Capt Rahman (Chhota) accompanied as forward observation officer. Rahman was a short, neat, tight-lipped character. Outwardly there was nothing about him which merited a second look. But when 'Chhota' was given a job he transformed into a hunter. A part of the patrol got tangled with Indians and had to be extricated by artillery fire. In the engagement the patrol commander was killed. Rahman took over and brought the patrol safely back home. He made no narratives, but 5/13 Frontier Force acknowledged his gallantry. Two days later another patrol was sent out.

"I am Matin from 7 Field", Matin introduced himself to Maj Feroze a handsome Pathan from Hangu, the patrol commander.

"You must be the forward observer".

"Right".

"Start time 1400 hours. O.K" ?

At about 1600 hours the scouts in front froze into the ground. Matin crawled forward, and for the first time in his life saw a live enemy - two Sikhs preening themselves in their trench. Matin worked out own location by dead reckoning, added distance to the Sikhs and gave out fire orders. In the meantime, Maj Feroze took his men to raid

Indian position from flank. From his battery command post Matin was challenged for recognition. Matin called Capt Shirin (no kin to Shirin Dil).

"Look Shirin, I have forgotten the answer to your challenge. You recognise my voice? For God's sake fire".

The first round shrieked overhead and was lost in the distant landscape. Matin gave a bold correction, like he was taught at Artillery School. The round landed in the middle of the preening Sikhs. But Matin and party were spotted and shelled with mortars. Matin looked for shelter. His orderly said, "Don't worry. I will stop the bullet. You get on with your shooting". Matin gave the necessary orders and ended with, "Being shelled by mortars-keep firing. Out". The party hastily withdrew. In the melee Matin's wireless set went dead and he lost contact with the command post. On way to the battery position Matin ran into a worried 'Tubby' Hassan leading a search party for their forward observer.

After the guns had been deployed on 5 December the plan for infantry attack to cut Indian line of communications at Beri-Pattan was shelved. The artillery duel was triggered by Indian bombardment of our gun areas. Our retaliation awakened political leaders to the danger of escalation and a cease fire was mutually agreed. In accepting U.N. Commission, India detracted from its 'divine' claim to Kashmir. Considering the relative strengths of armed forces,

and the number of troops involved on either side, Pakistan Army could look back upon its achievement with reasonable pride.

In the days immediately after Independence Indian officers dismissed Pakistan Army as of little consequence. However, after 1947/48 conflict the professional performance of our Army became a major preoccupation for Indian strategists.

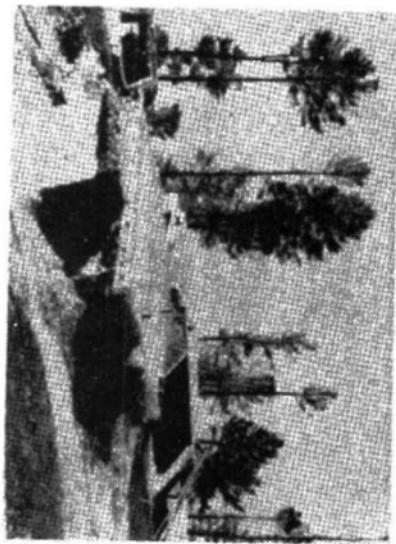
Pakistan Artillery operated in Kashmir under several handicaps, except for the spirit and skill of our officers and men. Guns were employed with great daring, with full calculation of the risks involved. In spite of Indian monopoly of air, where-ever our guns opened fire the Indians were surprised, receiving commensurate punishment.

The performance of Pakistan Artillery in 1947/48 I must be attributed to the training we received before Independence. But the officers and men were Pakistanis and so was their inspiration and elan. For the first time since the disintegration of Moghul Empire the people of these parts felt they were making their own history

The direction of attack on Pandu, own troops used this route for reaching the objective



Pandy Bty Position





1 Mtn Regt, 3.7" Howitzer; Neelum Valley 1948



A 25 Founder gun manhandled to 5,500 feet, in action on hill-top near Nausadda in Neelum Valley, Nov. 48

A Mortar Detach-
ment Pandu Area
Winter 1948

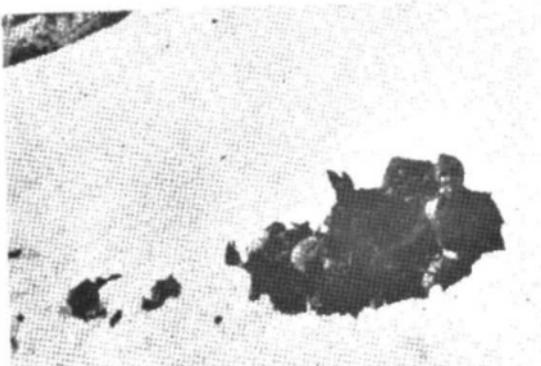


An Azad Defender 1948





Bridge put up by the Sappers in
Neelum Valley 1948



Into Manhood

During the period between 1948 and 1965 wars the Regiment of Pakistan Artillery grew into a confident, self-reliant, highly professional arm. It expanded from eight and a half regiments to thirty nine regiments and fifteen independent batteries; from 9,571 officers and men in 1948 to 30,397 officers and men in 1965.

The Regiment learnt to handle British and US equipments and later on Russian and Chinese equipments. Graduates of our Artillery Schools, while on courses in United Kingdom and America, held high positions in competition with the best in the world. In spite of suffocating restrictions on funds and equipment our captains and majors experimented with new techniques and made useful contributions. Our unit commanders, with barely one third strength in officers authorised to British, American and Indian units, trained and administered their commands with admirable efficiency; and led them in war. Our commanders of artillery formations, handicapped by shortage of ammunition, vehicles and communications, outfought an enemy almost three times our strength.

In the varying fortunes of our country and our Army, the Regiment of Artillery preserved integrity in performance and austerity in profession. It refused to be hustled into untried, fanciful doctrines. Its adherence to the uncompromising

mathematics of guns was sometimes considered irksome, but was vindicated by performance in 1965 and 1971 wars.

Directors Artillery

Sometimes before World War I the appointments of Directors/Inspectors General cavalry, infantry, artillery were instituted in European armies. Their duties included development of equipment, organization, tactics and training in respect of their own arms and as these would affect the army as a whole. Although subordinate to the Chief of General Staff, but being specialists in their own fields they had direct access to the Commander-in-Chief as advisers. The advisory role, in spite of its circumvention of chain of command, was maintained so that policy decisions at the highest level were based on first hand advice from the best available source.

The Directors/Inspectors General were of course appointed by virtue of their experience, competence and seniority. It was in the interest of the army that the appointments be held by officers recognised for professionalism and intellectual honesty. In their capacity as advisers to the highest army authority the Directors/Inspectors General could influence policy decisions, for good or evil. During operations, these officers toured battle areas in various theatres, evaluating combat effectiveness of equipment, organisation and tactics, effecting necessary improvements even during the course of war.

Brigadiers Morley and Frowen, by virtue of their service experience, professionalism and personalities maintained the tradition of direct access to the Commander-in-Chief. The privilege was reflected in expansion of artillery during the period 1948 to 1952, and it was justified in the training standards achieved.

There was of course a reciprocity in the privilege. The Commander-in-Chief had the advantage of communication with field units through only one intermediary. This correspondence combined with Directors' frequent visits to units made officers aware that their merits, or otherwise, would reach the highest level in two short steps. It gave us elevation and the confidence for forthright expression; a hallmark of true artillerymen.

In April 1952 Brig Morley met a serious accident while on reconnaissance in Kaghan Valley. He was patched up in CMH Rawalpindi by Maj Shaukat. A few weeks later he left for United Kingdom to recuperate and terminated his contract. Brig Frowen, commander corps artillery, officiated as Director for some months. He would have been an excellent replacement for Morley. But Frowen had already been accepted as Secretary Royal Artillery Association and left for United Kingdom in June 1952. Frowen was followed by Brig Willians who was known in Indian Artillery for his hard mouth and his knowledge of gunnery. But while serving in Pakistan he did not over exert himself. Indeed his tenure marked deterioration in the status of Director of Artillery. In

November 1954 Brig Lamont took over. He was a pleasant man, professionally competent and tried to patch the damage done by his predecessor.

By this time General Ayub had been Commander-in-Chief for five years, and although he was an easy listener, his regal personality rather shied off indifferent characters. Also during 1954-57 the Army was in the process of reorganisation and absorption of US Military Aid. In this connection the Directors dealt with Maj Gen Yahya Khan (Chief of General Staff) and few felt the need of by-passing him. Nevertheless, Ayub had the knack of calling any level of staff officer without causing resentment and Directors who were sure of their ground did indeed meet him frequently.

In 1957 Brig Muzaffar was the first Pakistani artillery officer to be appointed Director Artillery. He was understandably conscious of the critical timing of his appointment, but carried it through with confidence and aplomb. During his tenure the schools and centre completed reorganisation. Pamphlets were rewritten so that a uniformity of drills and procedure was obtained for US and British equipment. This experience was later on applied to Russian and Chinese equipments.

Brig Muzaffar was replaced by Brig Wasi-ud-Din in 1958. Brig Wasi suffered from few complexes in respect of dealing with Chief of General Staff or the Commander-in-Chief. He was respected for his unambiguous expression. In 1960 Brig Tikka took over from Wasi. Tikka was the right

personality to put up fight against artillery being buried in the bottomless swamp of New Tactical Concept.

In 1961 Brig M. J. Kiani replaced Tikka. This was a mistake for the Regiment of Artillery as much as for the Army. Naturally the status of Director Artillery plummetted.

Brig D. P. O'Reilly took over Director Artillery during the critical period December 1963 to May 1966. When the 1965 war started he tried for transfer to the field, was over-ruled. During his tenure he tried to re-establish rapport with other Directors and Principal Staff Officers. It was hard going as these officers had got used to ignoring Reilly's predecessor. As luck would have it the DMO - Brig Gul Hassan - precipitated an incident which helped O'Reilly. During the prelude to 1965 war Gul Hassan off handedly faulted Director Artillery on the deployment of anti-aircraft units. O'Reilly was an experienced anti-aircraft gunner and was not in the habit of accepting ill-founded criticism from uninitiated staff officers. Gul Hassan was rather shaken by the blast of reaction. And as is usual in General Headquarters the other Directors did not need a second telling.

In the course of 1965 war the Chief of General Staff, Maj Gen Sher Bahadur, mentioned in a conference with Directors the urgent need of 3 inch mortars and asked if it was at all possible to have them produced within the country. Lt Col Mehmood Khan GSO-1 Artillery Directorate got a prototype produced by ITTEFAQUE FOUNDRY in Lahore, within two

weeks. The model was put through necessary trials and proved acceptable. The cost of each item was almost one tenth of the imported Version. ITTEFAQUE had charged the army only for cost of labour and material. Their number one said, "This is our humble contribution towards the war effort". In 1966 ITTEFAQUE manufactured a prototype of 120 mm French mortar. This was rejected by DITD as the base plate of the first model had cracked during preliminary trials.

O'Reilly was replaced by Brig Modi Abdus Salam who held the appointment for eighteen months, followed by Brig Jamil Akhtar Aziz for twenty seven months. This was the period for a professional analysis of 1965 war. It would have helped us in implementing an effective organisation and employment of artillery. But our miasmatic politics carried hypnotic powers, against which the hazardous profession of arms had little chance.

Demonstration for Shahanshah

In early March 1950 Shah Mohammad Ran Pahlavi the Shahanshah of Iran paid a state visit to Pakistan. A high-light of the visit was a demonstration of attack by 3 Armoured Brigade on Nowshera ranges. Artillery support was provided by 3 (SP) Field, II Field and 8 Medium Regiment from 1 AGRPA. 3 (SP) was commanded by Lt Col Muzaffar,

11 Field by Lt Col Cunningham and 8 Medium by Lt Col Wasi-ud-Din; the last named acted as commander artillery's representative during the firing. Brig M. Yates had taken over from Brig Crawford as commander 1 AGRPA. Throughout World War II Yates had served with guns. He saw action in Western Europe, North Africa and Italy. In the battle of Al-Alamein he was commander artillery group responsible for counter bombardment of hostile guns. He was a modest spoken officer who never raised his voice; and with his experience of live battle he never over-looked sub-standard performance.

During the first week of March it suddenly warmed up in Rawalpindi. The Chief of General Staff decided that summer uniform would be worn for the demonstration. The change from winter to summer dress was not due till 15 March. Brig Morley was caught by the sudden change but managed to secure a uniform on 7 March. That day it rained; and the next day. It rained almost for three days.

10 March was an unbelievably perfect day. There was a slight wind emphasising intoxication in the air. The landscape was freshly washed and looked painted, each contour, nullah, mudflat or sand-dune standing out in its distinct water colour. There were three rehearses of the demonstration including dress rehearsal. The fire-plan provided for preparatory bombardment for 30 minutes, support of the attack with 'on call' concentrations and engagement of DFs to demonstrate consolidation of own troops on objective.

During the preparatory bombardment the targets were engaged on TIME-ON-TARGET basis with the result that 48 field and 16 medium shells landed on each target almost simultaneously. The ground was wet from previous days' rain. There was no dust. As each series landed on its target the ground opened up in multi-hued blossoms of bursting shells. The Shahanshah showed his royal pleasure with spontaneous exclamations of "Afreen" - magnificent

The exercise was the first of its kind in Pakistan. For an expenditure of 500 medium and about a 1000 field shells we acquired the confidence of concentrating and controlling the fire of an artillery formation. It was not merely show-business. It was good training.

Artillery Centre 1949 to 1965

The panache and elan of a regiment is the aggregate of panache and elan of its individual soldiers; which seed is planted in the training centre. The young volunteer, weaned in his adolescence from the affection of home, arrives in the centre feeling rather drained. In an efficiently managed institution his void is filled by the regiment of his choice. In the centre he learns the responsibility of privilege and the privilege of loyalty, through which education he makes his contribution to the tradition of his regiment. Of course such attitude is imparted only through example and seldom through abstruse semantics on leadership.

No one acquires the spirit of self-sacrifice through sermons on self-sacrifice.

During the period 1952 to 1954 appointments of Artillery Centre Commandants were made in appreciation of above requirements. With the sudden expansion of artillery under U.S. Military Aid higher priority was accorded to appointments of artillery formation commanders. Training centres in Pakistan Army are virtually independent commands. The Director and formation commander concerned cannot exercise the same degree of supervision as is obtained in a field formation. And of course the resources in manpower, money and land constitute a powerful temptation to loosen up things.

The first Pakistani commandant appointed in March 1952 was Col Mohammad Abbas Beg. He was a methodical officer, and persevering. During his tenure the first reunion was celebrated. The quality of functions was in character with austerity and efficiency of artillery. In January 1953 Col K. Wasi-ud-Din assumed command of the centre. Wasi had been commissioned into mountain artillery, the elite of Indian Artillery. He put some of his impeccable preferences into the life of the centre.

In June 1954 Col Jamshed was appointed commandant. A big hearted Janjua Rajput from Jhelum, Jamshed was a natural leader. Unfortunately he had been superseded for promotion to commander artillery. The command of Artillery Centre was awarded to him in the nature of a

consolation prize. Jamshed loosened up accordingly. He remained in command for six years and the centre was all the poorer for the experience. In November 1960 Col Yusaf Ali Nanjiani replaced Jamshed. Nanjiani had also been superseded for promotion. He again had a long inning with all its disadvantages.

During 1965 war the ration strength of Artillery Centre rose to more than 12,000 personnel. Admittedly this was an extra-ordinary strain on the centre administration which corroded by nine years of mismanagement nearly broke down. There was some trouble over funds leading to a court of enquiry. In the aftermath Col Nanjiani and his second-in-command Lt Col Maqbool Hussain moved out.

The First Reunion

Perhaps to the young officer, commendably task-oriented, reunions may appear some purposeless pursuits. He sees a lot of old, decrepit, quaint soldiers talking of out-of-date battles using out-of-fashion vocabulary. The average civilian overly conscious of his exclusion from martial ceremonies may perhaps look upon reunions as unbridled orgiastic conventions.

Reunions are none of these things.

In battle a soldier is called upon to perform the highest act of religious worship i.e. self-sacrifice. Throughout his service he leads a hard life, a life of self-denial, of discipline, of

monastic dedication to his profession. No man gives his life for mere salary. And one of the many things that keep a soldier in battle, to the point of self-sacrifice, is the spirit of comradeship. A feeling that he is part of a proud family; without which he would be a mere serial number.

Reunions are a necessary step towards keeping the spirit of comradeship alive. They give old soldiers the joy of being wanted, and young ones an understanding of family pride. In recounting yarns, some true, some exaggerated and some more, a link is forged between generations which ensures continuity of family tradition.

In 1951 the Regiment of Royal Pakistan Artillery celebrated its first reunion. The chief guest was Lt Gen Sir Otto Lund representing Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, Master Gunner to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. When Brig Frowen introduced the general by his last name there was some amusement among Pakistani officers. After a couple of pronouncements Brig Frowen got the point and referred to the guest only as "General".

The retired officers and JCOs at the gathering were in a minority, and had had only a brief association with serving officers. There was a noticeable lack of spontaneity in the conversation.

One of the items on programme was crash action by 2 Royal (Kohat) Mountain Battery to mark its one hundred years of service. A crash action by a mountain battery is an

exhilarating sight, enough to ignite the most frigid character.

The scene opened with the gun position officer and his assistants leading 2 (Kohat) as for line of march. The officers and men were dressed and laced for battle, but spruced up to pass a royal inspection. The horses and mules more than matched the gunners in this turn-out. Their beautiful bodies groomed with love and pride, their sleek hides glistening under the morning sun, their rippling muscles a cadence in animal flesh, their polished harness, their burnished buckles, their white halters, the whole spectacle a feast for the mountain gunner.

Suddenly the gun position officer roared,
"BATTERY TARGET"

The column dissolved into a 'confusion' of frenzied action; riderless horses galloping off the field; mules divested of loads; gunners going through seemingly uncoordinated motions. Within a minute or so the confusion resolved into four guns, the gunners responding to GPO's orders as if on gun drill. There was a crash of gun fire as four guns fired blank ammunition. And even before the smoke had cleared there was a roar from GPO,

"CEASE FIRING"

Again there was a frenzy of action. The horses and mules appeared by magic and galloped unerringly towards their

appointments. Again the confusion was resolved into GPO leading his guns off the scene.

Most of the retired officers and JCOs had served with mountain artillery. The sight of battery action ignited them, and thereafter conversation never lagged. The retired gunners recounted experiences of Frontier operations, North Africa, Italy and Burma. The younger ones talked of Kashmir. And each side learned to respect the other.

Colonels Commandant

The appointment of Colonel Commandant epitomises the traditions of a regiment in the person of its most illustrious member, serving or retired. The appointment is honorary carrying no authority according to any book of rules. The influence of Colonel Commandant over the affairs of the regiment is by virtue of his personality, by virtue of the respect he inspires and by virtue of his intrinsic leadership. It is an appointment which gives flesh to regimental tradition and carries it forward from generation through generation.

During the period 1947 to 1966 the Regiment of Artillery did not have an officer of general rank to be appointed as Colonel Commandant. And in order to obtain some hearing in the ionosphere of Army hierarchy it was agreed to request the Chief of Staff Lt Gen Nasir Ali Khan to accept the appointment. Gen Nasir was an infantryman and a gentleman in the Confucian definition:

"The gentleman behaves in harmony but never conforms. The man of small character does conform but never behaves in harmony".

General Nasir Ali did not conform.

In 1959 Lt Gen Azam succeeded to the appointment. He wore the thing for a button-hole. Period.

In 1965 Maj Gen Tikka Khan was the first artilleryman to hold the appointment. Tikka had distinguished himself during 1965 war in the Rann of Kutch and in defence of Sialkot. His stock within the Regiment as well as outside stood high. With his boundless energy he gave the appointment flesh as much as spirit.

In 1975 Lt Gen Azmat Awan was appointed Colonel Commandant. A gentleman and an accomplished professional he brought grace and understanding to the appointment.

Scheme Axe

In 1949 United Kingdom and India devalued their currencies. Pakistan, in spite of pressure from United Kingdom did not do so. Towards the end of 1949 Mr Hasnain, Secretary Finance, while addressing students of Staff College stated that there was no occasion for Pakistan to devalue. He affirmed that our economy was sound and burgeoning. In 1950-51 during the Korean war Pakistan earned considerable

foreign exchange through sale of cotton, jute and other agricultural products. But in 1952, without any warning, we devalued our rupee. The Army was ordered to be reduced by 40,000; which reduction was carried out with ill-seeming and unplanned haste. In the meantime India had not suddenly become friendly and there was no prospect of settlement of Kashmir through mutual kissing. Indeed in 1950 and 1951 there had been threatening concentration of forces on both sides of the Punjab.

Whatever the economic justification for reduction, the manner in which veterans of World War II and Kashmir were flung out onto the streets left the Army in a rather sad state. Every one was bitten by insecurity with consequential deterioration in professionalism. For progress in any profession is by virtue of freedom of criticism, which flourishes when security of service is not subject to arbitrary whim. Insecurity inculcates the desire for survival; the cocoon of conformity rather than the loneliness of dissent.

Some of the personnel disbanded in 1952 were recalled in 1954. But two years of destitution had eroded their zest for soldiering.

Along with devaluation there was no corresponding increase in emoluments. Prices shot up to two times, and the value of soldiers' services was reduced to half. It was stupid to expect that his commitment and performance remained unaffected.

Practice Camp

Perhaps the one training schedule which saved artillery being submerged in the quick sands of model discussions were our practice camps. On these occasions reconnaissance, movement, digging, camouflage, occupation of positions, every drill was carried out under restrictions approximating to war; according to the ingenuity of the unit and formation commander concerned.

The practice camps were occasions where gunners either made or lost rank; where units and formations learnt that a single fault remained chalked in black for a whole year, until washed away by correct performance during the succeeding practice camp. Indeed it is a tradition among artillerymen to label units according to their performance in these exercises.

On one occasion a subaltern messed up his shoot. Brig Frowen happened to be at the observation post. Looking at the commanding officer Frowen drew his fore-finger across his throat. The commanding officer asked, "Shall I march him up to you sir" ?

"No. He is too small for me. I will cut your throat".

It was appreciated that if in the presence of hungry, unforgiving 'ogres' an officer kept his head he was unlikely to be perturbed by a remote enemy. Of course there were some officers who tried short cuts. But the guns did not bend their ballistics and the short-cuts were exposed for what they were; gimmicks to fool the unwary.

Expansion - 1948 to 1952

In October 1948 it was appreciated that a single anti-tank battery - notwithstanding its gallantry - could not cope with anti-tank defence of the critical area Sialkot-Lahore. Towards this purpose 9 Anti-Tank Regiment was raised at Rawalpindi. Personnel with anti-tank experience were drawn from 2 Field Regiment, 7 Field Regiment and Artillery School Nowshera. The regiment was equipped with a mixture of 17 pounders and 6 pounder guns. Out of dire necessity 9 Anti-Tank was raised from whatever personnel could be hurriedly put together into a unit and into operations. This system could not be the most desirable for future expansion.

Brigadier Morley set out a viable procedure for new raisings. Thus when a field regiment was to be raised, three existing units were selected to provide a battery each for the new unit. Each 'mother' unit was ordered to raise a fourth battery and all batteries were balanced with young soldiers and veterans. The battery for the new unit was picked by drawing lots. This system saved new units from being treated as garbage pits for old units. It was this procedure which enabled us to set up a new unit on its legs within two weeks, and even in the middle of emergencies.

During the period January 1948 to August 1952 the following units were raised or acquired :—

Field Regiments

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 11 Field Regiment | ... Jan 1949 |
| Raised by Lt Col Ritchie. | |
| 14 (Abbasia) Field Regiment | ... April 1952 |
| Acquired from Bahawalpur State Forces. | |
| 18 Field Regiment | ... July 1950 |
| Raised by Lt Col Murad Ali. | |

Medium Regiment

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| 12 Medium Regiment | ... May 1949 |
| Raised by Lt Col Tikka Khan | |

Anti-Tank Regiments

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| 9 Anti-Tank Regiment | ... Oct 1948 |
| Raised by Lt Col Wain-Wright. | |
| Converted to 9 Medium on 20 Sep | |
| 1956. | |
| 10 Anti-Tank Regiment | ... May 1949 |
| Raised by Lt Col Sher Jang. | |
| Converted to 10 Medium on April | |
| 1957. | |

Mortar Regiment

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| 21 Mortar Regiment | ... Aug 1952 |
| Raised by Lt Col Akhtar Saeed Alvi. | |

Converted from 8/15 Punjab Regiment (M. G. battalion) in 1952. Converted to 21 Medium on 20 June 1956.

LAA Regiments

13 LAA Regiment ... April 1950
Raised by Lt Col O'Reilly.

19 LAA Regiment ... Aug 1951
Raised by Lt Col Calver.

HAA Regiment

20 HAA Regiment ... May 1951
Raised by Lt Col A. A. Shah.
Converted to LAA on 1 March 1960.

A.A. Operations Room

55 A.A. Ops Room ... Oct 1948
Raised by Maj Aslam Murad.

Raising of Headquarter Corps Artillery

In 1948 it was planned that GHQ would split up into 'Main' and 'Rear' headquarters during an emergency. The 'Main' headquarters was in effect an adhoc corps headquarter. The Director Artillery was to act as commander corps artillery. A staff component was sanctioned and set up in Rawalpindi.

The deployment of Indian troops against Punjab in June 1951 triggered sanction of proper corps headquarter along

with the necessary artillery element. Brig J.H. Frowen D.S.O. was appointed commander corps artillery. The following units were put under his direct command :—

47 Field Battery 13
 Survey Battery 13 LAA
 Regiment 82 LAA
 Battery
 4 x 40 mm LAA Guns. (Artillery Centre) 2x3.7 inch
 HAA Guns (Artillery Centre)

In July 1957 this headquarter was designated as Headquarter 1 Corps Artillery with Brig Abbas Beg as commander. During 1965 war, Brig M. J. Kiani was in command. The headquarter operated for some three days in Khem-Karn. It was then split, a substantial portion remaining under command 11 Division Artillery whereas Brig Kiani and the residual staff set up shop somewhere in Lahore.

During the course of fighting Headquarters 4 Corps Artillery (Brig Amjad Chowdhri) operated with 1 Corps in Chamb and Sialkot. After the 1965 war the designation of these artillery headquarters were interchanged as follows :—

Old Designation	New Designation
HQ Arty 1 Corps	HQ Arty 4 Corps
HQ Arty 4 Corps	HQ Arty 1 Corps

Exercise Victor Target

The Artillery School Nowshera had neither the literature nor the officers with requisite experience to impart training for employment of artillery at corps and army levels. To fulfil this critical need Brig Morley and Brig Frowen planned

for model discussions where officers down to Lt Col

participated. The first Victor Target was held in 1954 when both Morley and Frowen had departed.

The exercises were indeed academic because at that time we were short of adequate artillery support even within our divisions. But the discussions were held to orient our officers in employment of large scale fire power; and therefore a number of problems of command, communication and logistics were identified. The discussions were refreshingly candid and junior officers never felt inhibited in criticising - solutions presented by their elders.

Maj Gen Haya-ud-Din, Chief of General Staff, attended the first Victor Target for a day. During the tea break he remarked, "By God you gunners really do tear into each other".

Someone replied, "It is better to do it here. There is no blood".

The general agreed.

As we raised more units and acquired more experience the form and content of Victor Targets improved until the exercises reached their peak in 1957/58. That year the Army was caught by the menace of "New Tactical Concept",

which threatened to undo the entire work of reorganisation of the period 1954-57.

U.S. Military Aid

The U.S. Military Aid programme was initiated in 1954. Under this programme Pakistan Army was to be built upto one armoured division, four infantry divisions, one armoured brigade group, and support elements for two corps.

The total manpower ceiling for new raisings was laid down at 40,000 all ranks. This figure represented the number of personnel who had been released under Scheme AXE. It had no relevance to the number of units required to be raised in order to complete five and a half divisions along with corps troops.

At the start of the programme U.S. officers offered to provide equipment on unit pack basis, if we adopted U.S. Army Tables of Organisation and Equipment (TO & Es). Had we accepted this offer the Aid programme would have been implemented with speed and without friction. Furthermore we would have profited in respect of obtaining equipment as U.S. units were rather lavishly equipped as compared to ours. There was of course one snag. U.S. units had about two third the manpower of our units. Naturally there was great reluctance on every one's part to reduce manpower. At this stage the arms directorates collectively put up the objection that since Pakistan Army was committed to British tactical doctrine we could not adopt U.S. tables of organisation and equipment.

The Americans took some time to react to this quirk,

and the result was to our lasting disadvantage. They stipulated:—

- (a) Total manpower ceiling for new raisings should not exceed 40,000.
- (b) Total strength of a formation or unit should not exceed U.S. equivalent.
- (c) No equipment would be provided which was not included in U.S. TO & E.

General Ayub set up GHQ Planning Board to deal with U.S. Military Aid and consequential reorganisation of formations, units, schools, centres, static installations and GHQ. The Board was headed by Brig Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan; with Brig Abdul Hamid Khan, Brig Fazle Muqeem members, and Lt Col Shaukat Riza secretary .

The expansion in artillery could not have been carried through within four years without adoption of U. S. organisation. The change over resulted in saving of fourteen command posts within a divisional artillery for control of 72 guns. The reduction in command posts resulted in speeding up concentration of fire. Finally the new organisation included:—

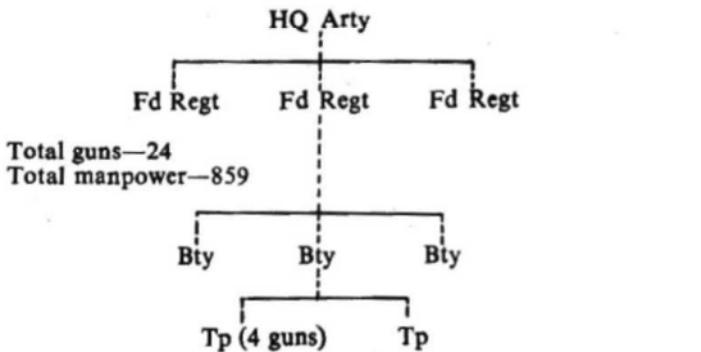
- 54 Field guns) as against 72 Field guns
- 18 Medium guns) in old
- 36 120 mm mortars) organisation

The old and new organisations are given below to illustrate the comparison.

OLD ORG OF INF DIV ARTILLERY

Total guns—72

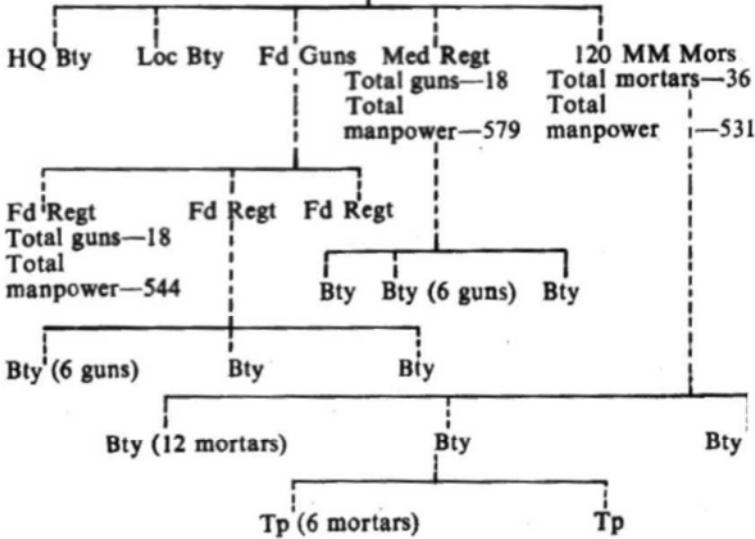
Total Manpower—2639



ORG OF INF DIV ARTILLERY AFTER U.S. AID

Total Fd guns —54
 Total Med guns —18
 Total 120 MM Mors—36
 Loc Bty — 1

Total manpower—3091



It was appreciated that the first and foremost consideration in integration of Aid should be raising of maximum number of units within the overall manpower ceiling of 40,000. In pursuance of this policy a list was made of units required to complete five and a half divisions, and troops for two corps. Thereafter manpower ceilings were fixed for each arm and service within which the required number of units had to be raised. And finally tables of organisation and equipment had to be produced to fit in with limitations laid down by U.S. team.

Of course there was resistance to the change, and some people deliberately dragged their feet or let loose red-herrings. But General Yahya used a judicious mixture of persuasion and compulsion to obtain the desired results. U.S. equipment was absorbed as soon as it arrived in the country. In artillery the Aid programme brought about the following expansion:—

Units before Aid (Nov 1954)		Units raised under Aid Programme (Dec 1959)
HQ Corps Arty	— Nil	HQ Corps Arty — 2
HQ Div Arty	— 3	HQ Div Arty — 5
Mtn Regt	— 1	SP(Fd)Regt — 4
(SP) Fd Regt	— 1	(incl 1 Mtn Regt converted to SP)
Fd Regt	— 6	Fd Regt — 13
Med Regt	— 2	Med Regt — 7
Atk Regt	— 2	(incl 9, 10 Atk, 21 Mor converted to Med)
Heavy Regt	— Nil	Heavy Regt — 4

Mor Regt	— 1		
Mor Bty	— 2	Mor Bty	— 14
Loc Regt	— Nil	Loc Regt	— 2
Svy (Loc) Bty	— 1	Loc Bty	— 4
LAA Regt	— 3	LAA Regt	— 5
HAA Regt	— 2	HAA Regt	— 2
LAA Bty	— 2	LAA Bty	— 3
Lt Bty	— 1	Lt Bty	— 6
		(3.7 inch How)	

Having accepted U.S. equipment and organisation the adoption of U.S. gunnery techniques was more or less inevitable. Once the decision was accepted our artillerymen in units, schools, centre and GHQ went through the exercise with characteristic professionalism. The Deputy Director Artillery, Col Tikka Khan, quickly appreciated the necessity of raising maximum units within the laid down manpower restrictions. Thereafter expansion and conversion were carried through with enthusiasm. The drill for new raisings laid down by Brig Morley proved invaluable. Of course there was the odd unit commander who tried to beat the system. He was dealt with accordingly.

The formations selected for completion, or raising, were as follows:—

- 1 Armoured Division — To be raised from
3 Armoured Brigade
- 7 Division
- 8 Division
- 10 Division
- 15 Division

100 Armoured Brigade — To be newly raised
Corps Troops for I and
IV Corps.

7, 10 and 15 Divisions already had their artillery formations but these were non-standard and incomplete. By November 1954 artillery units were grouped as follows:—

7 Div Arty

3 (SP) Fd Regt — Affiliated with
3 Armd bde for training

11 Fd Regt

8 Med Regt

9 Anti-Tank Regt

8 Div Arty

14 Fd Regt

10 Div Arty

2 Fd Regt

4 Fd Regt

7 Fd Regt

10 Anti-Tank Regt

12 Div Arty

1 Mtn Regt

15 Div Arty

18 Fd Regt

12 Med Regt

21 Mor Regt

3 A A Bde
6 LAA Regt
13 LAA Regt
19 LAA Regt
5 HAA Regt
20 HAA Regt
55 AAOR

Apart from a conglomerate grouping some units were stationed in administrative areas of non-parent formations; resulting in some confusion in operational commitment; some ambiguity in training.

After conversion of 1 Mountain to 1 (SP) Field Regiment 12 Division was left without artillery support. It was decided that a field regiment and a mortar battery would, in rotation, do a tour to provide artillery support for 12 Division. 9 and 10 Anti-Tank Regiments were converted to medium regiments and the anti-tank role was transferred to Recce and Support battalions. There was a danger of 21 Mortar Regiment being broken up into independent mortar batteries. Wiser councils prevailed and the unit was converted to 155 mm hows.

The Artillery Schools (Nowshera and Malir) had a battery each organic to their establishments. It provided equipment and administrative support to the institutions. These batteries were amalgamated with newly raised units. Their functions were taken up by regiments from field formations going through tours in rotation.

The overall effect of reorganisation was such that by 1956 the Army had raised units totalling 20,000 all ranks but the overall strength had not gone up by more than 2,000. The Americans objected to being soaked for 20,000 personnel. General Yahya called up Brig Gen Rothwell H. Brown (USMAAG chief)

"What do you want ? Shall we stop the reorganisation or stop expansion" ?

"Neither".

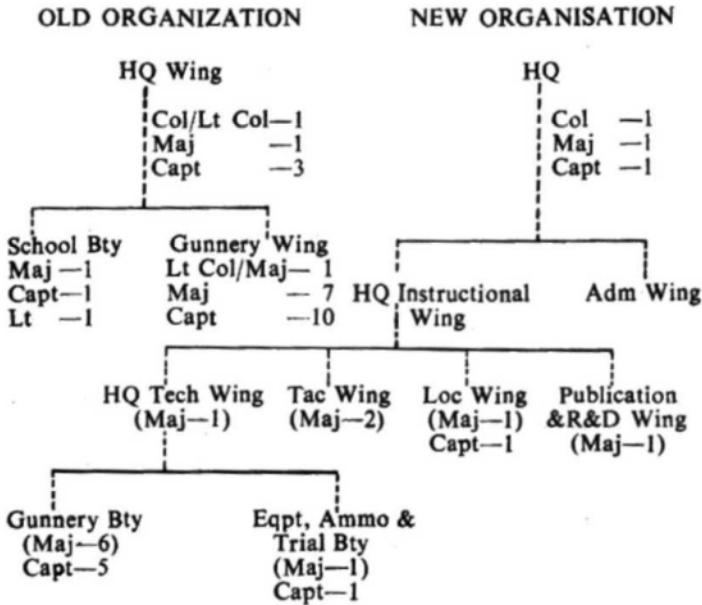
"You foot the bill" ?

"OK" !

Perhaps the most onerous burden connected with expansion and conversion to U.S. equipment and technique was borne by the Artillery Schools.

Artillery School Nowshera had to produce fire control instruments for British equipment to fit in with U.S. techniques. Altogether three sets of new fire control instruments were produced. The Artillery School also worked out conversion of British dial sights, directors and range tables to U.S. equivalents. Unfortunately this suggestion was not implemented, resulting in two sets of mathematics, entailing difficulties in training and in concentrating fires of U.S. and British equipments.

In order to cope with the above task the Artillery School Nowshera was reorganised as follows :—
FIELD ARTILLERY SCHOOL NOWSHERA



Through the U.S. Military Aid we obtained more than merely material. It opened our eyes to new standards of comparison. During the years 1955 to 1958 over two hundred officers from artillery attended courses in U.S. military schools, where they learned new skills and competed against students from Asia, Europe and the Americas. Several more went on orientation tours to NATO forces. We acquired confidence in absorbing new equipment and carrying out two-fold expansion within seven years of our birth. The reorganisation of the army

stimulated critical thinking; a questioning of 'sacred scrolls';
an

awareness that complacency is a symptom of hardening of arteries.

Combining of Messes

One of the by-products of Army reorganisation was combining unit peace-station messes into brigade messes.

In 1954 an artillery unit had a posted strength of fifteen officers of which no more than five were dining members. With the price structure in 1955/56 it was becoming difficult to maintain a unit mess in respectable standards of furnishing and catering with contributions from five dining and ten non-dining members. The GHQ Planning Board (Gen Yahya) recommended to Gen Ayub that in order to maintain a reasonable quality of life the messes should be combined. Gen Ayub accepted the recommendation and necessary instructions were issued on the subject.

There was resistance, particularly from old armour and infantry units. They were understandably reluctant to sink their funds, silver and property where their own identity would become irrelevant; as they merged into an organisation where the member units would have few emotional links.

In artillery, however, there were few emotional problems. The units and formations both belonged to the Regiment of Artillery. The combining of messes expanded the dimensions of our loyalty to the Regiment. Brig Tikka, with characteristic energy, worked out new mess rules,

subscription rates, schedule of furniture, cutlery, crockery, catering staff, uniforms, even down to weekly menus.

By 1956 artillery formation messes started functioning. At first the standard of catering plummetted and there were snides about the latest 'mess'. But by 1960 the bugs had been identified and by 1964 artillery formation messes were running satisfactorily.

There is a Chinese proverbs :—

"The wise man does not allow problems to become big. He solves problems while they are small. The wise man grows big by solving small problems\"

But of course a mess is not a road-side eating house. It is a place of education where the young learn to shed their fears and the old their favours; where the quality of life inculcates and indicates the quality of professionalism. It is a place for correspondence between past experience and future hopes; between hot idealism of the young and cool realism of the experienced. Finally the mess is a home where brotherhood is forged; where daily conduct is weighed against regimental tradition; where silver mementoes are not foppish exhibitionism but record affirmation and acceptance of brotherhood.

For all this the mess life has to be preserved in all its silver, in all its furbishings, in all its rituals of ceremonial dinners.

When a mess deteriorates to a road-side eating house it is better to demolish it and let officers eat off the men's cook-house, with matching expectations.

And there would be no pretence.

Separation of Air OP

By 1954 the maintenance, ground support and flying training for Air OP were still being provided by the PAF. In the course of U.S. Military Aid this unit had to expand from one flight of 4 aircraft to two squadrons of 46 aircraft. The PAF preoccupied with its own re-equipment and expansion could not give the necessary priority to Army requirements. On the recommendation of GHQ Planning Board Gen Ayub decided that henceforth the Army would assume total responsibility for operating its own aircraft.

During their period of association with artillery the Air OP units were allowed considerable freedom of action; which trust was honoured by the quality of response given by the units. But their status as artillery units restricted the full exploitation of aircraft for purposes of command, communication, reconnaissance, liaison and maintenance. In appreciation of this requirement Lt Col Azmat Awan produced a plan which formed the basis for present structure of Army Aviation.

The separation from the Regiment of Artillery would have come through with goodwill and grace. However, in 1963 Brig M.J. Kiani sponsored Lt Col Shamsul Haq Qazi for

Commandant Army Aviation Base Dhamial, the number one appointment. Qazi had no qualification for the job.

The Aviation officers were a forthright, forceful lot. They did not relish Shamsul Haq Qazi. Gen Musa was alerted, and he ordered the separation in short order.

Qazi was left in mid-air.

Battle Inoculation

In 1956 a brigade from 10 Division was put through battle inoculation on Tilla ranges. Two field regiments provided artillery fire. It was the first exercise of its kind for Pakistan Artillery, and every care was taken to ensure that there were no mishaps. Perhaps there was over-supervision. The preparatory bombardment was a pride, and Gen Ayub was generous in his appreciation. The initial series of supporting fires were also faultless. Suddenly one round landed among assaulting troops and before the order to 'stand fast' was received by guns a second round landed in the same place.

There were half a dozen casualties which caused some consternation among the spectators. Gen Ayub said, "This is a hazard we have to accept if we mean to take this thing seriously". And he ordered continuation of the exercise as soon as casualties were cleared.

The mishap was clearly due to bad lay or wrong charge at the offending gun.

It is normal for artillerymen to acknowledge errors. The double checking of firing data implies likelihood of errors, although every effort is made to reduce their occurrence. Our conduct of practice shoots illustrates freedom of criticism in highlighting errors, horizontal as well as vertical. The ability to shoot without mistakes is attained only through their prompt recognition and equally prompt application of remedial action.

No such thing occurred.

The gun belonged to 14 Field Regiment. The commanding officer of this unit tried to pass blame to 4 Field. But 4 Field had not fired at all on that particular series. 14 Field then produced a rabbit. The offending gun had a peculiarity. 'After an odd thousand rounds the gun suddenly fired a couple of short rounds; which amounted to affirming that guns do sometimes lie.'

Perhaps 14 Field was not altogether at fault. Sometime during 1950's technical efficiency competitions crept into artillery units and formations. This was in imitation of rifle shooting competitions for individual soldiers. It was not realised that artillery concentrations are obtained through team-work in units and formations. Excellence is not a matter of high score in cut-throat competition between gun teams but doing the correct thing along with the entire formation. The

efficiency competitions led to unhealthy short cuts and a reluctance to admit errors.

Another thing. Fighting spirit cannot be imposed from above. It is cultivated through assurance that the individual soldier belongs to a group reciprocating his loyalty, irrespective of cost. Cut-throat competition erodes this assurance.

New Tactical Concept

The jugglery was based on two assumptions one cancelling out the other, and both with fractured ankles; to wit:—

- (a) We cannot imitate rich industrialised nations in basing our tactical doctrine on immense fire power.
- (b) Ground is held by fire power and not by manpower.

In deployment for defence an infantry division was split up into two parts; a 'Zone of Fire Force' and a 'Striking Force'.

The defensive layout was linear, without benefit of natural or man-made obstacles, with both flanks open. The refusal to use obstacles and the open flanks were to facilitate movement of the striking force. This force consisted of an armoured regiment and two infantry battalions supported by ONE field regiment. It had the task of destroying the entire

lot of attacker's guns at the split second when the attacker had penetrated through two-third of the defender's zone of fire.

The fire power of an infantry section was increased from one light machine gun to two. It was advocated that this increase enabled an infantry battalion to carry through any defensive or offensive task relying solely on its own integral weapons. And in order to rationalise this claim an infantry unit in attack was to move forward in half sections; leap-frogging and establishing base of fire alternatively.

In continuation of the claim of self-sufficiency of infantry units it was advocated that infantry division artillery be reduced :—

From	54 Field guns	To	30 Field guns i.e.
	18 Medium guns		five batteries of
	36 Mortars		six guns each.

Brig Tikka had in the meantime taken over as Director Staff Duties. He proved true to his reputation. He totally refused to even look at the proposed reduction. He won. Gen Yahya (CGS) had second thoughts and did not press the issue.

But in the melee we nearly lost 120 mm batteries altogether. Infantry Directorate had put up an organisation with the claim that with half of artillery manpower they would produce twice the volume of fire. A TO & E of infantry mortar company equipped with 18 mortars was

produced, forthwith. There was no provision for command post or observation post personnel.

Gen Yahya was skeptical of infantry mathematics. He called up Director Infantry.

"How do you propose to achieve twice the fire power of 36 mortars with 18 mortars" ?

"We will fire four times as fast".

"How" ?

"The artillery re-lay after every round. We will re-lay after every fourth round".

The mortars were retained by artillery but the batteries were reduced from three to one and the mortars from 36 to 18.

By the beginning of 1965 there was a further reduction of six mortars. The infantry division fire power in 120 mm mortars was reduced to twelve. During 1965 war the deficiency in mortars had to be compensated by resort to medium guns.

In 1964 Lt Col Umar, chief architect of New Tactical Concept, introduced 'Attack' to GHQ officers, lieutenant colonels and majors. An oft repeated slogan was, "We have to adopt something suited to the genius of our people". During the question period Maj RGLG Badshah asked, "I am rather slow-witted and I would like to know how do you determine the genius of our people".

The discussion wound up.

During the period 1959 to 1964 there was a torrent of TEWTS and model exercises from Army to battalion level, where the destruction of enemy artillery was assumed and not a subject for argument. There was a natural corollary to this assumption; if our striking force found little difficulty in destroying enemy divisional artillery then the reverse was at least probable. And consequently there was a shift in focus, from our primary role of supporting infantry and armour, to defence of own guns. Some senior artillery officers advocated abandoning guns and taking up small arms in defence of gun areas. Some even proclaimed, "We are as good as infantry".

Fortunately the inherent mathematics of guns prevented the disease from spreading.

During 1960 practice camp of 8 Division Artillery in Pishin, Brig Shami set up an exercise where 18 Field Regiment and a battery from 8 Medium defended the gun position against hostile attack. Introducing the exercise Brig Shami said, "This is not a demonstration. The purpose of the exercise is for us to see if the guns can defend themselves against hostile attack". It was assumed that the attackers had approached within 1000 yards before they were spotted. Thereupon the guns fired two rounds each, air-burst with zero fuze setting. After the firing the spectators were taken over the target area. There were shell splinters almost every five yards square, some buried a foot deep in the soft earth, in an area approximately 500 yards by 200 yards.

There was no more talk of abandoning guns and monkeying with small arms.

We Became Men

By 1965 the Regiment of Artillery was eighteen years old, but it was well past its adolescence. The events of 1947-48 had lifted us out of our infancy into an awareness of our responsibility.

As the level of our education and experience improved so did our willingness to measure the gap between responsibility and capability; so did our accuracy of measurement; so did our acceptance of measurement. It was through this characteristic that we managed to retain relevance between theory and reality of fighting; and reject formulae which failed the test.

By 1965 our artillery formation commanders had four years of command experience, our unit commanders had twenty years service, our battery commanders fifteen years service; topped with well-rounded military education.

By 1965 we were no longer adolescents, overly conscious of our reflection. We could look at our warts and root them out.

We had become men.



C-in-C Gen M. Ayub Khan at
the First Artillery Reunion in

1951





King Hussain of Jordan visiting
an Artillery Unit (9 March
1955)



C-in-C Gen. M. Ayub Khan
Reviewing the Parade of 1
Mountain Regiment



A Mountain Battery coming
into action



Lt Gen Nasir Ali Khan



Gen Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan



Lt Gen A. B. Awan



Lt Gen Mohammad Azam Khan



Lt Gen Sawar Khan



Gen Tikka Khan



Brig Frowen



Brig Richard Morley



Brig Mohammad
Muzaffar



Brig K. Wasi-ud-Din



Brig M J Kiani



Brig D P O' Rielly



Brig M A Salam



Brig J A Aziz



Maj Gen Hamid
Asghar Kiani



Maj Gen Khadim
Hussain Raja



Brig Mohammad
Iqbal



Brig Atta Mohammad
Khan Malik



Brig Niaz Ahmed



Maj Gen Abdul
Rahman Khan

The Edge Honed

(Map No. 2)

DURING the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict many voices whispered war to President Ayub. The President, however, refrained from taking any advantage of Indian embarrassment. It was a wise and honourable decision. Apart from the incalculable repercussions of our involvement we would, forever, have been dubbed jackals, blamed for a "Stab in the back", which was not in our character.

In fact Pakistan went out of its way to demonstrate goodwill. In 1963 when Sikh pilgrims visited Lahore, Sheikhupura and Hasan Abdal, they were surprised at the warmth of their reception. The Sikhs, by nature open-hearted, responded in kind. In Pakistan the emotions were carried forward through professional appreciations. Some of our senior intelligence officers made the naive deduction that in a war against Pakistan the Sikhs would not fight with any great enthusiasm.

Under the U.S. and British pressure Nehru made some play at talks on Kashmir. But as soon as the crisis with China simmered down Nehru reneged; according to character.

In 1964 the Indian constitution was extended to the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Field Marshal Ayub was chagrined.

He had hoped that Pakistan's restraint during and after the Sino-Indian War would make Indian leaders appreciate the continuance of good-will between the two nations. Indian volte-face convinced a reluctant Ayub that Kashmir would not be solved through peaceful means.

A fight to the death between two people is the ultimate phase of irreconcilable differences. The quarrel may start with perhaps some innocuous argument, escalating to vituperation, leading on to brick-bats and finally to the knife. A war between two nations is ignited by much the same preliminaries.

The year 1964 was marked by an unbridled, intemperate drift of tirades on both sides. By 1965 both sides had worked their way to the use of knife. Trouble started over two border out-posts in the Rann of Kutch, at the extreme south-east corner of Sind.

The Rann of Kutch (Map No. 2)

The Rann of Kutch consists of mud flats fringed by sand dunes. The flats are featureless wastes unrelieved by contours, shadows or even a blade of grass; no sound except the haunting sigh of wind; a mentally corrosive nothingness. At night the nothingness is absolute, Stygian, devouring. In the sand dunes area there is sparse, ugly vegetation wherever rain water settles in the shallows between dunes.

Ground observation is limited due to heat haze and lack of prominent features. Surface conditions during the dry period

are suitable for large scale military movement. However, friendly air cover for such purpose is mandatory. Movement at night is handicapped due to absence of orienting features.

Subsoil water is brackish and drinking water has to be transported over long distances. There are no local resources of food, labour, building material or transportation. For these reasons military operations in Rann of Kutch cannot be improvised on whim. But 8 Division had to operate in this area at short notice. And they did so with commendable success.

Whatever it's tactical charm the Rann has low strategic rating in an over-all war against India. Places like Rahim-ki-Bazar and Ali-Bunder bear witness to the period of first Muslim entry into the sub-continent. These are mere names on maps. On the ground their only reminders are some wasting bricks.

In 1001 Sultan Mehmmood of Ghazni passed through Rann of Kutch on his way to Som-nath in Gujerat Kathiawar. It was his only foray through the area. Perhaps the Rann was as inhospitable in 1001 as in 1965.

Gen Tikka resolved the logistic issue with his earthy simplicity. From sunrise to mid-day he was up in a helicopter moving from unit to unit; shaking hands, prodding men to laugh at the landscape, swallowing leathery tea or oily liquids, injecting everyone with his own confidence. He had

his midday meal where-ever he found himself and ate the sand-blown food with a relish which astonished his hosts. In the evening he held conferences with his staff. Things he wanted done by next morning; he had them jotted down in neat paras and sub-paras. Next morning he was up and about as if yesterday had been a holiday and the ensuing day would be another one. No one in 8 Division complained of shortages.

Having better troops to space ratio Indian patrols had been intruding into our territory where-ever they could do so with impunity. In March they established strong out-posts on Pakistan territory, claiming proprietary rights through traditional usage; something they had tried out against China in 1962. The posts in question were Sardar Post, and Biar Bet.

On 3 March 1965, 8 Division received warning order for possible action in Rann of Kutch. The warning order was carried forward according to drill. Headquarters 8 Division with divisional troops, 6 Brigade and 52 Brigade were located at Quetta. 51 Brigade with 83 Mortar Battery was stationed at Malir whereas its direct support regiment 14 Field was stationed in Hyderabad. 8 Division was commanded by Maj Gen Tikka Khan, with Brig S. M. Aslam for commander artillery, Brig Eftekhar Janjua 6 Brigade, Brig Azhai 51 Brigade and Brig Sardar Ismail 52 Brigade.

While precautionary moves were proceeding Pakistan tried to settle the issue through negotiations.

The Indians were intransigent; their confidence based on superior numbers. On night 6/7 April Brig Azhar received orders for attack on Sardar Post. Azhar ordered the following moves :—

- | From | To |
|---|----------------|
| (a) Headquarters 51 Brigade)
Headquarters 14 Field)
Regiment) Badin | Rahim-Ki-Bazar |
| Headquarters 83 Mortar))
Battery) | |
| (b) 18 Punjab less Company) Diplo Rahim-Ki-Bazar
60 Field Battery)) | |
| (c) Company 18 Punjab)
Troop 83 Mortar Battery) Diplo Vingi | |
| (d) 6 Baluch)
61 Field Battery) Hyderabad Rahim-Ki-Bazar
Troop 83 Mortar Battery) —Badin Rahim-Ki-Bazar | |
| (e) 8 Frontier Force)
62 Field Battery) — Already deployed
Troop 83 Mortar Battery) in Rahim-Ki-
Bazar on 17
March. | |

14 Field reported "Ready on Theatre Grid" at 2130 hours 7 April. 83 Mortar Battery less troop at Vingi was ready at 1630 hours the same day. Survey had been carried forward by survey troop (79 Locating Battery) from a trig point a distance of 62 miles from Rahim-Ki-Bazar. The troop was commanded by Subedar Shaukat Ali. A detachment of meteorological section accompanied the survey troop.

Brig K. M. Azhar accompanied by Lt Col Iqbal (14 Field) arrived at Mara Bridge at 0800 hours 7 April. The two officers complimented each other. Azhar, squat and ebullient, Iqbal, lean and taciturn. Lt Col Janjua (8 Frontier Force) joined them at Mara Bridge. They were briefed by Capt Afzal of Indus Rangers. Indian position in Sardar Post area consisted of three localities. Sardar Post itself was held by two companies of Indian Central Reserve Police. The designation concealed the strength of the organisation which was parallel to regular infantry. Enemy strength in other two localities was not known. They were designated 'Island' and 'Jungle'. It was appreciated that the three localities made up a battalion position.

The attack had been ordered precipitately. Between receipt of warning order and H-hour, there was hardly time to get troops to forming up place (FUP). In fact H-hour had to be postponed twice. The only maps available to units were of 1/250,000 scale which made the mud flats look flatter and ironed out contour differences between flats and dunes. While at Rahim-Ki-Bazar 51 Brigade was not allowed to break cover for reconnaissance. Air reconnaissance was obviously taboo.

In 1965 the posted strength of officers in an artillery unit was no more than fifty per cent of its authorised establishment. In a further effort at economy the overall strength had been reduced by twenty per cent. These trimmings were carried out with a light hearted unconcern for

replacement of casualties or reliefs during operations. The economy was a failure. For an organisation, even a commercial one, exists only for the purpose of its mission.

The shortage of officers led to expedients even before the first round was fired. Maj Altaf Husain battery commander 61 Battery, affiliated to 6 Baluch, had an accident and could not walk. Lt Col Iqbal ordered Capt Nazar, officiating battery commander 83 Mortar Battery to accompany 6 Baluch during the attack. Maj Altaf established static observation post on a mound near Rahim-Ki-Bazar. Of course Capt Nazar was with 18 Punjab in Phase I. During the move from concentration areas to forming up place 18 Punjab had got separated from its forward observers and Capt Nazar was detailed as replacement.

8 Division Artillery had a mixture of British, U.S. and French equipment.

14 Field had hardly completed conversion to 105 millimetre howitzers when it was ordered to move to Rann of Kutch. The regiment hastily reverted to British field guns. 25 Field Regiment was raised on 105 millimetre and went into action with them. 38 Field Regiment had 25 pounders and 12 Medium had 5.5 inch British guns. The mortar batteries carried 120 millimetre French mortars.

The main wireless with 14 Field, 38 Field and 12 Medium was 62 (British) set. This required two men for carriage;

one for the set and another for power source, with obvious disadvantages under fire. The forward observers were given PRC 10, as a stand-by. But the PRC 10, an American set, had no overlap with the British 62 set.

25 Field had American wireless sets.

The mixture of equipment and lack of sympathy between U.S. and British sets caused delay in obtaining concentration of artillery fire. It may have been anticipated that these handicaps combined with hazards of battle would lead to loss of artillery support in critical situations. However no remedial action was taken before, during, or after the 1965 war.

The total lack of cover influenced decision in favour of attack by night. In order to preserve surprise artillery support was to be ordered *On call'. The troops were new to the area and in the absence of any orienting features maintenance of direction was a nightmare. Timed artillery fire would have helped in this respect. It was not permitted. 18 Punjab and

8 Frontier Force were late in reaching the forming up place and Brig Azhar set H-hour for 0200 hours

9 April.

Bravo Company 18 Punjab advanced within a hundred yards of their objective without incident. Suddenly the nothingness of night was pierced by stilettos of tracer bullets

and the whiplash of machine gun fire. The forward observer Capt Nazar called for fire. Within minutes he was wounded, his PRC 10 damaged and signaller Kifait Ullah killed. Capt Nazar managed to crawl over to his 62 set and started passing fire orders. After a couple of adjustments they received another burst of fire. Nazar was killed, the set damaged and signal operator L/Nk Mohammad Anwar wounded.

Shortly thereafter the company commander Lt Khatalani and his second-in-command Subedar Mauz Mohammad were killed. The company commander's signal operator, a soldier with initiative and courage, started passing information about the enemy to 18 Punjab adjutant which was relayed to guns and artillery fire brought on target. The operator continued to pass information until he too was killed. After the battle Lt Col Iqbal wrote to Mr. Abdul Fateh Shah, Kifait's father. The father offered his second son to make up the loss to 14 Field.

In the meantime Alpha company 18 Punjab nor Bravo company 8 Frontier Force were at fault. Even in day-light it would have been difficult to recognise boundaries whose only sanction was a compass bearing.

After sometime on the objective both the companies withdrew. Lt Ahmad Sultan, forward observer, and fourteen other ranks of 8 Frontier Force remained on objective. Sultan called for artillery fire at 0620 and again at 0920 hours. Under cover of this fire he and his party rejoined 8 Frontier Force.

At 0530 hours on 9 April Brig Azhar ordered 6 Baluch to

attack right edge of Sardar Post. This unit had only two companies at disposal and two companies of 8 Frontier Force were therefore added on. Capt Nazar, officiating battery commander 83 Mortar, who was to accompany 6 Baluch, was no longer available. He had been killed earlier on, while with Bravo company 18 Punjab on Sardar Post. Fortunately Lt Riaz, an observer with 18 Punjab, was available and was detailed to accompany 6 Baluch. At 0940 hours Lt Ahmad Sultan was also ordered to join 6 Baluch. At 1200 hours commanding officer 6 Baluch called for artillery concentrations on objective preparatory to his attack. From 1210 to 1930 hours the objective was engaged intermittently on direction from Lt Riaz forward observer with 6 Baluch, Capt Ahmad Sultan battery commander with 18 Punjab and Lt Col Iqbal Ahmad commanding officer 14 Field. At 1500 hours, when 6 Baluch could make no further progress the attack was called off. At 1800 hours a smoke screen was fired to extricate Bravo company 18 Punjab from vicinity of Sardar Post.

Thereafter Gen Tikka ordered build up of artillery in this sector and the following moves were carried out:—

Unit	Date Destination
83 Mortar Battery	14 April Rahim-Ki-Bazar.
79 Division Locating	17 April “

169

Battery

12 Medium Regiment 22 April “

36 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment	23 April Rahim-Ki-Bazar
Headquarters Artillery 8 Division	21 April Ali-Bundar, 6 miles north-west of Rahim-Ki-Bazar

Meanwhile on 7 April 25 Field Regiment and 88 Mortar Battery were camping at Pishin. They were ordered to Quetta and put on six hours notice for move to the Rann of Kutch. On 8 April 6 Punjab with under command 81 Field Battery (Maj Saqib) and troop 88 Mortar Battery (Lt Ashraf Chowdhry) were ordered to move to Islamkot-Tharparkar district. Lt Saad-ud-Din Khan and Lt Abdul Majid were attending course at Infantry School. The news was relayed to them by their batman. They jumped into the next available train and caught up with the regiment at Hyderabad.

The guns had some difficulty in the soft sands between Nankot and Mithi, but they arrived at Islamkot by 1130 hours 12 April. By 1300 hours 81 Field Battery was deployed for action.

On 13 April Lt Ashraf Chowdhry's mortar troop was ordered to move with a company from 6 Punjab to Virawah. On 17 April it was ordered back to Islamkot. Again it was moved from Islamkot to Vingi on 19 April where it was placed under command 15 Punjab. Of course the pushing around is quite normal for a mortar unit. They are out of caste with artillery units boasting rifled equipment. For a field artilleryman, floating high with the wizardry of calibration and predicted

fire the smooth bored mortar can never acquire the status of a rifled gun. And even though the fire power of a field battery is less lethal than that of a mortar troop (6x 120 millimetre mortars) field guns take precedence over mortars. Furthermore mortar units are appended to field regiments, and do not receive parental consideration. Nevertheless the command of a mortar troop or battery confers enviable independence, a rare opportunity for junior officers to taste the intoxication of command. In 1965 and 1971 wars our mortar officers carried out assignments which drew admiration from their high caste colleagues.

On 15 April Brig Eftekhar alongwith Maj Zafar (82 Field Battery) and Maj Feroze (officiating commanding officer 15 Punjab) carried out reconnaissance of area Jatrai - Vingi. Eftekhar then ordered 6 Punjab with 81 Field Battery to occupy defensive position in Jatrai and 15 Punjab with 82 Field Battery in Vingi. 80 Field Battery (Maj Riaz-ul-Haq Malik) was ordered to build up on 81 Field Battery. Survey of guns, observation posts and targets was completed by 20 April.

During the period upto 28 April artillery support was provided for some aggressive patrolling. At the same time the observers engaged opportunity targets and there was some lively exchange of fire. In one of the exchanges Subedar Shaukat (79 Locating Battery) with commendable speed located and engaged two hostile batteries.

Lt Saad-ud-Din established his observation post with 15 Punjab. It was his first time in action and he could hardly contain his excitement about ranging on live targets. Through his binoculars Saad could see olive green uniforms in Gulu Talao and Chadbet. But there was restriction on firing the first round. Brig Eftekhar and Col Nagi visited Saad, read the appeal in his eyes and nodded approval. Saad spat out his fire orders in one breathless torrent, lest the two senior officers change their mind. The Indians abandoned Gulu Talao.

In Quetta at 2200 hours 18 April 88 Mortar Battery (Maj Salim Akhtar Malik) was ordered to move to Jatrai forthwith. In an emergency military organisations seem to acquire preference for issuing critical orders in middle of night, like a Gestapo summons.

In Multan at 1000 hours 20 April 13 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment received orders to send a battery to Rann of Kutch. 133 Battery was detailed for the mission. The battery entrained for Badin next morning, reaching destination an hour before midnight 22 April. From Badin onward all moves were in organic transport. The battery reached Rahim-Ki-Bazar at 1130 hours 23 April and was ordered to deploy a troop each in 6 Baluch and 8 Frontier Force areas.

On 26 April Charlie troop (Capt Iqbal) was pulled out of forward defended localities (FDLs) and transferred to 6 Brigade area. The troop carried out several deployments, sometimes for protection of field guns, some times for the

benefit of 12 Cavalry. The troop commander, Capt Iqbal, made it his business to visit gun positions. In the course of one such visit his jeep over-turned, killing him on the spot.

At 1600 hours 23 April Brig Eftekhar issued orders to 6 Punjab to attack Indian position in Serabet. The attack was to be made during night 23/24 April. From the documents recovered on objective it was calculated that enemy strength consisted of two companies supported by a battery of 75 millimetre howitzers from 50 Indian Para Brigade. However none of this information was available before attack.

H-hour was set for 0130 hours and later changed to 0200 hours. Fire support consisted of indication of objective at H-hour and 'on call' programme during assault. Profiting from 51 Brigade experience N/Sub Noor Elahi equipped with a PRC 10 was stationed half way between guns and objective. Noor Elahi's job was to relay orders between guns and forward observers. Telephone cable was laid to reinforce this communication. Col Nagi remained at this station during the attack. It was a wise step.

At 0200 hours the first serial was fired indicating objective to own troops. The leading elements, Alpha and Bravo companies, found themselvas 600 yards short of objective. At 0230 hours another indication round was fired and 6 Punjab started their assault. Forty five minutes later they reached the objective and the jawans rushed forward in their

excitement. They had to be restrained as some of them ran into own supporting fire. Fortunately there were no casualties. Hitherto there had been no reaction from the enemy and 6 Punjab continued to advance for another 2000 yards. Col Mian then ordered the battalion to go to ground. Lt Nadir Pervez with a section of commando platoon was sent out to probe for location of enemy positions. At about 0415 hours Pervez captured an Indian officer and three other ranks. The officer was identified 2/Lt Sharma 3 Para Battalion 50 Indian Para Brigade.

At 0530 hours Brig Eftekhar arrived on objective, looking trim and unruffled in spite of a night long vigil. He ordered for the success signal to be fired off.

Col Mian had hardly finished adjusting defences when the Indians greeted the daylight with machine gun and artillery fire. Maj Saqib was with right forward company and could see the flashes of Indian weapons. Immediately he called for retaliation by 25 Field. In the meantime Brig Eftekhar quickly walked upto Saqib and said, "Gunner kuch fire wire Karo na'! As the light improved Saqib managed to silence enemy fire.

For attack on Serabet the R & S company had been ordered to establish a screen forward of objective, after its capture by 6 Punjab. The company was given 88 Mortar Battery (less troop) for artillery support. The group moved out at 0500 hours. Short of 6 Punjab position they came under fire from

Indian guns. The company immediately fanned out into two prongs and continued to advance, firing their weapons on the move. Simultaneously 88 Mortar deployed for action going through the drills with almost painful precision. Lt Inam Bari Cheema (25 Field) had been detailed forward observer with the R & S company. He saw the Indians withdrawing and wished them 'God Speed' with mortar fire.

There were plenty of souvenirs for every one; maps, fire direction equipment, tannoy, a director, some ammunition and even pots and pans. At about 0600 hours 24 April Eftekhar ordered 2 Frontier Force (Lt Col Iqbal) to take up defensive position on left of 6 Punjab. Next day 2 Frontier Force received orders for attack on Biarbet. The battalion was given, under command, squadron tanks (12 Cavalry), 88 Mortar Battery (less troop) and R & S company (15 Frontier Force). 25 Field less battery were placed in support. 2 Frontier Force was to move in 3/4 ton trucks.

At 1300 hours 25 April Maj Shakoor Jan, with a platoon R & S, was sent out to obtain information about enemy situation in Biarbet. About 2000 yards from Biarbet Shakoor came under enemy fire. He retaliated by calling fire from 25 Field. It required two adjustments before the target was recorded. Subsequent planning was made on the basis of this information. The fire plan for attack was a combination of 'timed' and 'on call' programme. From 0500 to 0510 hours a section each from 80 and 81 Field Battery was to fire salvos to indicate objective to attacking troops. From

0510 to 0535 hours both batteries were to provide covering fire. The 62 sets were mounted on jeeps, ensuring that the incidence of enemy fire would not become the habitual occasion for separating the set from its power source. A PRC 10 relay station was set up to ensure communication between observers and guns. H-hour was set at 0400 hours 26 April.

2 Frontier Force set off on time. An hour later they heard artillery salvos indicating objective. The shell bursts were not visible but from their sound the forward observers estimated them approximately 3 miles distant. The advance continued undisturbed until at 0520 hours the enemy opened up with maximum ill-will. Eftekhar, Iqbal, Babar (12 Cavalry) and Riaz-ul-Haq Malik were located with leading tanks. Enemy fire seemed to be searching for the group. Every one watched the shell bursts. Riaz reacted by ranging on flashes of enemy weapons. At 0600 hours Eftekhar ordered Squadron 12 Cavalry to lead the assault followed by 2 Frontier Force with R & S company on flanks. The forward observer with R & S company (Capt Asghar, 88 Mortar Battery) called for two rounds of smoke in an effort to orient himself. He had to call for four more salvos before he saw the smoke. And while engaged in this harmless affair he saw a jeep mounted with recoil-less rifle hurrying away from the objective. Riaz reached the objective on his jeep. He found five wild eyed Indian soldiers. Riaz called out, "Oe, come, here". They did. Riaz was recommended by Brig Eftekhar for award of Sitara-i-Jurat. Riaz did not get it. He was informed that he had merely been performing his duty. So were the others.

Immediately after capture of objective Riaz deployed two forward observers. Within minutes the observers registered the defensive fire targets.

15 Punjab arrived on objective on the heels of 2 Frontier Force. Two nights later some Indian vehicles wandered towards the position. A keen young brave shouted, "Tanks", and every one tried to acquire merit by shooting at the sound. Lt Sarfraz (88 Mortar) reported on wireless, "There are no bloody tanks. Some bloody fool is going round in circles". From the other side the noise stopped, and fifteen minutes later an Indian soldier blundered into 2 Frontier Force position. He admitted that the vehicles were carrying defence stores for what they thought were Indian positions.

After the action at Biarbet both sides used roving positions for harassing fire. The sound ranging bases deployed by 79 Locating Battery gave us an advantage in the exchange. Hostile positions were located with an average accuracy of 100 yards. After the first exchanges there was noticeable hesitation in enemy activity. On our side the restriction on expenditure of ammunition improved our shooting.

8 Division 'Area of responsibility' extended from Mara to Vingi. The phrase 'Area of responsibility' was ill-defined in terms of specific military action intended by the issuing

authority or acknowledged by the recipient. Like the term 'Be vigilant' it indicated loose thinking; a shirking of responsibility. After some time it did not even outrange professional discrimination, since it provided a convenient escape for failure. So, by the end of April, 6 Brigade and 51 Brigade were deployed 7 miles apart, with open flanks and the entire area suited for large scale military movement. 52 Brigade with 38 Field were located at Jatrai to counter attack any enemy move between or on flanks of the two forward brigades. Considering the nature and extent of the area of responsibility no single enemy move could be rated with higher probability than any other.

On 23 May 52 Brigade Group was ordered to move to Lahore. In its place Brig Sheikh Aslam, commander artillery, was appointed commander of counter attack force. Sheikh Aslam made up the force with the following

- Headquarters Artillery
- Squadron 12 Cavalry
- Troops 36 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment
- Headquarters 12 Medium Regiment
- 18 Punjab less company
- 12 Frontier Force less 3 companies

As soon as the force was concentrated at Vingoor Sheikh Aslam set about refining the counter attack plans. But before Aslam could engage in angry argument the fighting in Rann of Kutch was terminated by mutual agreement.

Kashmir (Map No. 1)

The fighting in Rann of Kutch escalated from a dispute between border security forces to a clash between a division on each side. Neither India nor Pakistan wanted all out war at this stage. But knives had been flicked and neither side could trust the other with its back exposed.

In a confrontation between neighbouring states a titillation of armed forces follows its own compulsion towards full scale deployment. Thereafter disengagement of troops without some trial of strength becomes anathema as 'chickening out*'. By August 1965 the two armies had worked their way to such confrontation. Meanwhile the Americans warned us that in case of another round of hostilities United States military assistance to Pakistan would be promptly switched off. But immediately before the Rann of Kutch an event occurred which was to lead us to full scale war with India.

On the opening day of Division Commander's conference Maj Gen Akhtar Malik gave a talk on activities of 12 Division. It was an extravagant talk giving the impression that raiding of Indian battalion or brigade headquarter was a matter of routine for 12 Division. On 6 August Azad Kashmir Radio announced that freedom fighters had penetrated into Indian held territory to liberate the State of Jammu and Kashmir. All India Radio accused Pakistan of complicity. Within a week Indian Army attacked

across the cease fire line. Bedori bulge was selected for elimination. This would enable the Indians to bypass the Pir Panjal range; in which objective they succeeded.

12 Division had a frontage of approximately 300 miles, with poor communications, and where the nature of terrain severely restricted fields of fire of direct fire weapons. This weakness could be compensated only through additional artillery support. But 12 Division was deficient of artillery available even to a normal division in the plains. The total number of guns with the division consisted of sixteen ancient 3.7 inch howitzers, twenty four field guns and eighteen 40 millimetre anti-aircraft guns.

12 Division was divided into four sectors. The word sector was ill-defined. It was commanded by a brigadier but was about twice the dimensions of a normal brigade in terms of troops and frontage. The infantry element in the division consisted of five Pakistan Army battalions and twenty Azad Kashmir battalions. The latter had three companies each and less than half the establishment of machine guns authorised to Pakistan battalions. There were no recoil-less rifles. Communication equipment was similarly deficient, or obsolete or worn out.

Azad Kashmir troops, although employed throughout their existence in operational area, were on lower scales of pay and benefits in relation to Pakistan troops. The relationship between the two was reminiscent of Indian and British troops before Independence. The supporting services for 12

Division were a patchwork of ill-assorted units. All in all 12 Division was lowest priority for troops and material. Kashmir was not the area where a military decision would be sought by either side.

Perhaps.

In the meantime there were large gaps in the defensive system. Admittedly most of these related to terrain considered impassable. But of course this consideration was a half-conscious admission of our weakness. The other half discounted human ingenuity, determination or enemy capability; and our self-deception was complete.

Headquarter Artillery 12 Division was headed by Lt Col Nazir Ahmad. All artillery units except 82 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery were under command of their respective sectors. Headquarter Artillery had no direct communication with its fire units scattered over 300 miles of front. In fact considering the range of weapons, facilities for command and control or switching of forces, neither Headquarter 12 Division nor Headquarter Artillery had the means to influence events in any material respect once the shooting started.

From May onwards 12 Division was built up at the cost of other people, mostly 7 Division.

11 Field Regiment along with its affiliated 25 Brigade (7 Division) was moved from Peshawar to

Pasrur. In July they moved into Kharian. On 7 August they were put under command 12 Division to defend Puna-Tandar. 35 Field Battery was detached and sent to Chinari. It was replaced by 34 Medium Battery (10 Medium Regiment). 10 Medium Regiment was taken out of 7 Division and ordered into Muzaffarabad. 34 Medium Battery was detached and went on to join 11 Field, and 35 Field Battery joined 10 Medium. 2 Field Regiment was taken out of Artillery School Nowshera and deployed in Kotla. 89 Mortar Battery was taken out of Bhai Pheru (7 Division) and distributed between Neelum and Jhelum valleys.

It may be pointed out that 7 Division along with 1 Armoured Division formed General Headquarters counter attack force.

In early August artillery in 12 Division was deployed as follows:—

- a. No. 1 Sector (1 and 5 Azad Kashmir Brigade areas in 1970)
 - (1) 10 Composite Medium Regiment
 - (2) 101 Composite Field Battery (4x 25 pounders; and 4x 3.7 inch howitzers)
 - (3) 89 Mortar Battery

- b. No. 2 Sector (2 and 6 Azad Kashmir Brigade areas in 1970)
 - (1) 102 Composite Field Battery
 - (2) 104 Composite Field Battery

- c. No. 3 Sector - less Puna - Tandar (3 Azad Kashmir Brigade area in 1970)
(I) 103 Composite Field Battery
- d. Puna - Tandar - 25 Infantry Brigade (7 Azad Kashmir Brigade area in 1970)
(1) 11 Composite Field Regiment
- e. No. 4 Sector (4 Azad Kashmir Brigade area in 1970)
 - (1) 2 Field Regiment
 - (2) 81 Azad Kashmir Field Battery

Independence day anniversary (14 August) was celebrated by shelling Uri with a section of 5.5 inch guns taken forward to Chakothi somewhat in imitation of 1948. This time Indian retaliation killed three of our gunners and wounded six. The wounded included Maj Siddiqui, the battery commander.

In Neelum Valley the enemy attacked Pir Sohaba. Some positions were lost. Lt Mohammad Saleem, 89 Mortar Battery, was seriously wounded while bringing fire on enemy.

On night 21/22 August 11 and 12 Azad Kashmir Battalions attacked Mahl-Barmoch feature in Hot Spring area. The attack was ordered with inadequate preparation, in bad weather and with troops who had little rest for the past week. Nevertheless 12 Azad Kashmir Battalion captured a portion of Mahl feature. Capt Rafiq, the forward observer with leading company, was mentioned by Gen Akhtar Malik for courage and initiative.

On 4 September there was a crisis in Neelum valley. Capt Rafiq was ordered to obtain two 3.7 inch howitzers from Ordnance Depot Rawalpindi and fly them in by helicopter. Rafiq rang up Air Headquarter. Air Marshal Nur Khan was on the line. Rafiq asked for Wing Commander Qayyum. The Air Commander-in-Chief insisted that he himself would deal with the captain. Rafiq blurted out his request; was told, "Go to Chaklala. There are two H43 Helicopters standing by for air. rescue operations. They are yours". Rafiq flew the guns, one to Muzaffarabad the other to Barian beyond Tithwal. One gun was deployed in Jura and the other in Laswal. They fired almost continuously until their barrels burnt out.

It now dawned on our General Staff that irrespective of the colour of our mess kit artillery firepower is an inescapable 'evil' of fighting. There was a frantic, almost incoherent, wail for raising artillery units. Immediately three 25 pounders and four 5.5 inch guns were issued 'on loan' to 12 Division; without manpower or communications or fire control equipment. One 25 pounder was despatched to Daurandi, two 5.5 inch guns were deployed near Hot Springs; two 25 pounders and two 5.5 inch guns were taken out to cover Haji Pir Pass. But Haji Pir had fallen before the last named arrived on scene.

On 3 September 145 Composite Medium/Heavy

Battery was raised. It consisted of four 5.5 inch guns and two 7.2 inch museum pieces. On the way to Mirpur one 7.2 inch gun wandered off the Grand Trunk road near Dina and turned its navel haplessly towards the heaven. The battery was deployed as follows:—

- 2 x 5.5 inch guns — Bagh
- 2x 5.5 inch guns — Hot Springs
- 7.2 inch gun — Pir Gali

12 Medium Regiment was withdrawn out of Rann of Kutch and returned to Quetta on 7 July. One week later it found its way into Raiwind as part of

11 Division Artillery. On 5 September at 0200 hours 39 Medium Battery was ordered to move to Division. The Indian attack against Sialkot -Lahore was a bare 24 hours away. The battery was redesignated 39 Independent Medium Battery. Arriving in 12 Division it was virtually broken up. Two guns were deployed in Bagh along with two from 145 Composite Battery. The remainder four guns went to Daurandi to shell Punch.

146 Independent Field Battery was raised at Campbellpur on 6 September. All its personnel were reservists, some of whom had not seen a gun for over ten years. However the battery carried out a fortnight's training in Nowshera, and by 23 September it was in action in Kheuretta.

The patch work did not suffice. But the realisation came only when we were neck deep in trouble.

On 10 September Col Ijaz Ahmad, colonel staff, took over the newly created appointment of commander artillery 12 Division. That same day Brig Ahsan Rashid Shami, commander artillery 1 Armoured Division was killed near village Chima on the road Kasur-Amritsar. Ijaz was posted to replace Shami. These two officers had been friends from their student days in Government College Lahore. During service in Pakistan they and their families had grown very close together. Ijaz received the news of Shami's death on telephone. And before the shock was replaced by pain he had to hasten to his new appointment. It was about a month after the war when Shami's body was brought back from India that Ijaz broke down.

On 16 September Col Azmat Awan took over commander artillery. Azmat brought a breath of fresh air, and luck, to 12 Division. His unambiguous rejection of mongrel solutions finally led to a complete reorganisation of 12 Division Artillery. By third week of October he managed to get the following on ground :—

- (a) 46 Light Regiment
- (b) 47 Light Regiment
- (c) 50 Light Regiment
- (d) 51 Light Regiment
- (e) 48 Field Regiment
- (f) 49 Field Regiment
- (g) 39 Field Regiment
- (h) 145 Composite Medium/Heavy Battery
- (j) 81 Field Battery (AKRF)
- (k) 82 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery (AKRF)

In mid-August, preparatory to Chamb operation, 2 Field Regiment and 81 Azad Kashmir Battery were placed under command 4 Corps Artillery.

When one is not blessed with foresight one is for ever out of tune with events. But where courage is lacking neither foresight nor hindsight get a chance.

Chamb (Map No. 1)

As 12 Division lost ground General Headquarters decided to attack along Chamb-Jaurian-Akhnur to divert Indian pressure. The attack was to be launched from Azad Kashmir territory across the cease fire line. It was assumed, with astonishing naivete, that the self-imposed restriction on the part of Pakistan would be reciprocated, in that the fighting would be confined to Kashmir. On this assumption 7 Division Headquarter was deployed outside Azad Kashmir, and initially Headquarters 4 Corps Artillery also managed to stay out of this territory.

It was a gamble, where we closed our eyes to the odds against us. For our attack to produce the desired reaction our forces had to advance twenty miles into hostile territory, working against the grain of the land, with their left flank exposed to Indian jabs. The operation would have consumed approximately two divisions; detracting from our capability

to defend Lahore - Sialkot - Kasur; diverting our resources from key terrain. And of course the Indians would see the point long before our troops reached Akhnur. Meanwhile 8 Division was scattered to the four corners of West Pakistan:—

51 Brigade with 14 Field and 83 Mortar Battery remained in Rann of Kutch.

6 Brigade with 25 Field went to Chamb to become part of 7 Division.

52 Brigade with 38 Field and 12 Medium Regiment moved to Raiwind to become part of 11 Division.

One troop of 88 Mortar Battery was gifted to 7 Division and the other to 11 Division.

Headquarter 8 Division with its Headquarter Artillery awaited in Kharian looking for employment.

After the war 8 Division was reconstituted from bits and pieces in Sialkot. It moved into the same building which accommodated 15 Division; an arrangement which could not be otherwise than reducing each in its stature.

It does not require exceptional military acumen to appreciate that the area Sialkot-Lahore-Kasur is of primary importance to the defence of Pakistan. The shape of the border confers a critical military advantage to whichever side takes the initiative. And a thirty mile penetration into the other side

is likely to end the war in one's favour.

There is a sharp transformation of landscape in respect of observation, concealment and trafficability between dry and wet seasons. During the wet season large areas in proximity of canals and rivers get water-logged and fragment armour operations. However the ground dries up rapidly and within a fortnight after rains tanks can operate with ease. Canals and rivers provide good defensive positions and a penetration of thirty miles involves crossing of about four water obstacles. The depth and width of water in rivers varies considerably according to the time of year. The pattern of vegetation before and after harvest radically alters fields of ground observation. But whatever the time of year forward observers in support of attack can rarely observe beyond five hundred yards. This deficiency has to be compensated by ground and air observers authorised to call for large concentrations of artillery fire.

For centuries this land of five rivers has been the battleground for domination of the Sub-continent. The possession of this land exerted a compulsion to extend power to the far corners of India. Whenever Delhi controlled Punjab its flag swirled over the Hindu Kush and beyond. Whenever the people from north won over the Punjab they had little difficulty in over-running the rest of India. The people of Punjab are hardy, industrious, intelligent and self-willed; neither effervescent nor desiccated; trusting and trust

worthy; lovers of poetry and rising to heroic heights for an inspiring objective. Some myopic out-siders bracket them with buffaloes; a painful miscalculation.

For centuries in the decisive battles fought on this land the people of south and east employed superiority in numbers. The people from north and west won only through qualitative superiority. The Partition of Punjab articulated historical differences and 1965 brought them into sharp focus.

1 and 4 Corps Artillery groups were a reserve of fire power for obtaining superiority in a selected battle. For a successful offensive envisaging quick penetration it was necessary to employ both the groups to blow a hole through the enemy defensive system. In fact the groups were composed for this specific role. Pakistan's quantitative inferiority could be compensated only through higher precision in the employment of forces. This precision was wanting in some places. On the eve of war the two artillery groups had been fragmented and far removed from any concentrated action.

4 Corps did not exist on ground and therefore 4 Corps Artillery had no parent field formation to serve with. The regiments of this formation were scattered from Bhimber down to Sialkot; the headquarter itself reduced to line of communication duties. Headquarter 1 Corps (Lt Gen Bakhtiar Rana) was responsible for operations in Sialkot but Headquarter 1 Corps Artillery was removed to Kasur, its regiments distributed between 10 and 11 Divisions.

Brig Amjad Chowdhri. Commander 4 Corps Artillery, was not the type to sit content with the role of a service headquarter. He pleaded with Maj Gen Sher Bahadur. The general appreciated his keenness for proper employment of corps artillery groups. Amjad received an understanding nod and immediately shot off to reconstitute his group. By August he managed to rope in the following units :—

2 Field Regiment 39 Field Regiment 28 Medium Regiment 32 Battery 10 Medium Regiment 111 Battery 29 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment 17 Corps Locating Regiment

It was nothing like the original formation. But it was at least something with which to try and prove its power in battle.

In May 1965 2 Field Regiment was stationed in Nowshera acting as School regiment. On 18 May it was ordered to move to Tanda and was affiliated to 102 Brigade. The regiment was commanded by Lt Col Afzal Khattak. On 15 August it became part of 4 Corps Artillery while retaining its affiliation with 102 Brigade. The regiment deployed for battle of Chamb on night 30/31 August.

39 Field was raised on 10 May at Campbellpur by Lt Col Ihsan-ul-Haq . Chaudhri. On 30 May the regiment calibrated its guns on Nowshera ranges. On return from Nowshera it was ordered to Sialkot and became part of 15 Division

Artillery. In the last week of July the regiment carried out its first course shooting and soon after got its first taste of battle. It became part of 4 Corps Artillery and was deployed near Padhar in direct support of 4 Sector (Brig Hameed).

28 Medium was raised on 15 December 1956 at Jhelum by Lt Col Ameer Ahmed. It was equipped with 155 millimetre howitzers. In December 1957 it moved to Multan, in June 1963 to Campbellpur where it became part of 4 Corps Artillery. In 1965 the regiment was commanded by Lt Col Luqman with Maj Faiz Ali Chishti as its second-in-command. In May 1965, 28 Medium was ordered into Lahore where its batteries were gifted to field regiments of 10 Division Artillery. In the first week of August it was reassembled and ordered into Kharian where it was reinforced by 32 Battery (10 Medium Regiment). On 12 August it was ordered to prepare position in Padhar in support of 4 Sector operation.

The night 12/13 August was hot and humid as it can be in the Punjab during monsoon. As the men dug through the hard dried up earth they cursed. That was perhaps the seventh position they were doing in as many days. "Jang - Wa ! Wo" ! They derided. Nevertheless they finished the work, and well.

81 Azad Kashmir Battery was raised at Rawalpindi in October 1948 by Maj Hameed Khan. He was an experienced mountain gunner and managed to set up

the battery in quick time. The battery was initially equipped with twelve 3 inch mortars, then 81 millimetre mortars, and in 1957 with 3.7 inch mountain guns. In 1962 it was recognised for its merit and rewarded with 25 pounder guns. On 10 August it joined up with 4 Corps Artillery with Maj Irshad Khan as its battery commander.

111 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery was taken out of 29 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. This regiment was raised in August 1957 at Malir Cantt by Lt Col Muhammad Ayub Khan. In April 1965 it was stationed in Mansar Camp with Lt Col Rashid Hayat as commanding officer. The regiment was part of 4 Corps Artillery.

On 17 April 29 Light Anti-Aircraft was placed at twelve hours notice, on 4 May at six hours notice, and on 5 May the batteries moved off to their battle locations; 109 Battery to Jhelum bridge, 110 to Chenab bridge, 111 to Kharian, 112 to Ravi bridge. In mid-July the regiment returned to Mansar Camp. Within a week 111 Battery was ordered to Kharian and affiliated to 11 Cavalry for possible operations in Kashmir. On 13 August 111 Battery was ordered into Padhar for protection of 4 Corps Artillery during the coming battles.

17 Corps Locating Regiment was raised on 1 June 1956 by Lt Col Mausoof Ahmad Ansari at Nowshera. It was built around 13 Survey Battery which we inherited from Indian Artillery. In fact 13 Survey fathered two locating regiments and four independent locating batteries in less than four

years. In 1965 17 Corps Locating Regiment was commanded by Lt Col Mohammad Ali Malik, an old mountain gunner. During May through August 1965 the regiment surveyed the area Chamb and Sialkot establishing bearing pickets in places likely to be occupied by guns in case of war. On one of these safaris Lt Col Malik managed to stop Maj Gen Yahya's flag car with his jeep. The General slowly got out of the car, extended his hand to a horrified Malik, and laughingly said:—

"That is one way of introducing ourselves. I happen to be General Officer Commanding 15 Division".

For reasons of security the surveyors worked in civilian clothes, pretending to be members of Highway or Irrigation departments. They fooled no one. Where-ever they went they were greeted with understanding nods, local delicacies and patriotic rendering of military salute. Locators are usually looked upon either with awe, or down as low caste gunners. Actually they are a precious lot working in ones and twos, removed from their parent units, usually ignored by gun units and exposed to hazards of enemy ambush or mistaken shooting by own troops. But without them artillery practice would deteriorate into medieval archery. The accuracy of our predicted fire was acknowledged by a surprised enemy. And the surprise achieved gave us the necessary margin for dominating the battlefield. And neither accuracy nor

surprise would have been possible without the excellent data provided by our locating units. By 12 August survey and preparation of gun positions had been completed. Information about targets was obtained from 12 Division. The targets visible from own positions were surveyed. Sound ranging and flash spotting bases had been deployed to confirm location of hostile guns.

Maj Chishti was given the task of conditioning Indians to the noise of tanks and vehicles. From 12 August onwards Chishti drove his H13 tractors upto the cease fire line and back. When the actual deployment took place enemy forward troops and observers were not unduly concerned, or alerted.

On 7 August within twenty four hours of our 'freedom fighters' crossing into Indian held Kashmir the Indians shelled villages Chamir and Koel (near Awan). In view of the tone of Indian broadcast Indian action could not be otherwise than a warning to Pakistan that war would not be confined to Kashmir. Nevertheless Maj Gen Akhtar Malik ordered Brig Hameed No. 4 Sector Commander:—

"Capture Laleal and Red Hill by first light 16 August".

Brig Hameed gave out orders for attack at 1130 hours on 13 August. 19 Azad Kashmir Battalion was to capture Laleal and 14 Azad Kashmir to capture Red Hill. The latter is a small knoll north of Laleal.

4 Corps Artillery occupied gun positions on night 14/15 August. At 0745 hours 15 August the first salvo went off on to its target, the Indian field regiment which had been giving trouble for the past week. Six field and four medium batteries fired on each target in turn. Thereafter 4 Corps Artillery turned its attention on enemy defences in Dewa and Chamb. All concentrations were predicted and fired on Time-on-Target basis. The surprise achieved and damage inflicted were in corresponding proportion. In Dewa ammunition and petrol dumps were destroyed. In Chamb Brig Behram Marker was killed while holding 'O' Group.

As 19 Azad Kashmir Battalion approached Laleal it met eerie silence. The enemy had abandoned positions as a result of 4 Corps Artillery bombardment.

The story in respect of 14 Azad Kashmir Battalion was different. Red Hill was a stronger position and a determined enemy commander kept 14 Azad Kashmir at bay throughout the day. Next morning, 16 August, as the battalion renewed attack there was no reaction from Indian position. There was no one there.

On 18 August a section of guns from 28 Medium Regiment was sent out to engage Beri Pattan bridge. This target had received punishment in December 1948. Capt Iqbal Qureshi was detailed as observer. It was a prize assignment. Brig Amjad and Maj Chishti positioned themselves 400 yards from the observation post. The target was at extreme range from

guns and for observation of fire Iqbal could get no nearer than 11,000 yards from the bridge. Iqbal had Capt Afzal (GSO-3 Headquarter Artillery 4 Corps) for company. After a few ranging rounds Afzal shouted 'snake'. Iqbal told Afzal to deal with the snake while he continued with the shoot. The two officers took turns at shooting at the bridge and scaring the snake. It took five hours before the bridge and the snake acknowledged the observers¹ perseverance.

On night 21/22 August Maj Chishti deployed a battery from 28 Medium and 32 Battery from 10 Medium some two thousand yards short of cease fire line. The Indian guns in Pallanwala were baited with a battery of 39 Field. There was the expected reaction from Indian guns. The hostile batteries were located by 17 Locating Regiment and thereafter our mediums carried out a sound ranging shoot. There was no answer from the Indians for about half an hour. Thereafter they fired away at whatever caught their fancy, which was not near enough to do much damage.

In the meantime the Indians captured Kargil and Haji Pir Pass. In order to relieve pressure on 12 Division, it was decided to capture Chamb through to Akhnur. Maj Gen Akhtar Malik gave out orders for attack at 0900 hours 30 August. 12 Division plan for the operation consisted of three phases :—

- Phase I (a) 102 Brigade with 11 Cavalry capture Sakrana and Chamb.
- (b) 4 Sector capture Dewa.

- Phase II 10 Brigade with 13 Lancers capture Akhnur.
- Phase III 102 Brigade link up with 25 Brigade operating on Naushara - Jhangar Dharamsal axis and capture Rajauri.

The three brigades had been collected from two divisions; 4 Sector and 102 Brigade from 12 Division, and 10 Brigade from 7 Division. On 4 September 6 Brigade was to arrive from 8 Division in Quetta. 4 Sector was commanded by Brig Hameed, 102 Brigade by Zafar Ali Khan, 10 Brigade by Azmat Hayat, and 6 Brigade by Eftekhar Janjua. The last named had won Hilal-i-Jurat in Rann of Kutch.

10 Brigade along with 27 Field Regiment was stationed at Kohat. At 0930 hours 4 May the group received orders to move to its concentration area. The orders terminated a twenty four hours vigil. 27 Field was raised at Lahore on 1 July 1956. It's first commanding officer was Lt Col Mohammad Hussain Ansari, a former instructor gunnery and an officer with experience of war and long service with guns. In 1965 the regiment was commanded by Lt Col Ghulam Jabbar, a Bihari with all the intelligence and devotion of the Muslims who initiated the fight for independence a hundred years back.

At 0730 hours 4 May the first vehicle crossed the start point on way to Khushalgarh bridge. The bridge was too narrow to be negotiated by 2 1/2 ton vehicles

towing guns or trailers. The two had to be unhitched before entrance and exit and hitched during crossing and after exit. It took a whole day to cross the bridge. 10 Brigade Group arrived in Bhai Pheru on 9 May and stayed in this water-logged, snake-infested, bug-ridden area through the suffocating months of May, June, July and August. At 1400 hours 28 August 10 Brigade Group received orders to move out for border defence duties in Gujrat area. At 1600 hours 27 Field was on the road and reached Gujrat by evening 29 August They were directed towards Jalalpur Jattan. The attack on Chamb was forty eight hours away. In July and August restrictions on leave were relaxed and some leave personnel had not rejoined when 27 Field moved out of Bhai Pheru. But these men got the smell of war and most of them reached Jalalpur Jattan at about the same time as their regiment.

On 29 August 6 Brigade along with 25 Field were placed on twenty four hours notice. Brig Eftekhar had insisted on continuing association with 25 Field. The regiment detrained at Gujrat on 4 September and joined 7 Division Artillery.

In order to support attack on Chamb 4 Corps Artillery was built with following units :—

- 2 Field Regiment
- 39 Field Regiment
- 81 Azad Kashmir Field Battery
- 8 Medium Regiment

- 28 Medium Regiment
- 32 Battery 10 Medium Regiment
- 124 Battery 33 Heavy Regiment (155 millimetre guns)
- 127 Battery 34 Heavy Regiment (8 inch howitzers)
- 111 Battery 29 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment
- 17 Corps Locating Regiment

In August 1965, 8 Medium Regiment was stationed in Sialkot as part of 15 Division Artillery. Lt Col Atta Mohammad, a confident and popular officer was in command. On 25 August the regiment was ordered to move to Gujrat, from where it was directed to Assar and became part of 4 Corps Artillery. On night 29/30 August 8 Medium moved into a hide near Padhar and on night 30/31 August occupied its gun position for the battle of Chamb. The regiment was placed in direct support of 11 Cavalry.

33 Heavy Regiment (155 millimetre guns) was raised on 15 November 1957 at Quetta. The first commanding officer was Lt Col Mohammad Saeed, a robust and forthright officer, a hard task master. In January 1965 Lt Col Mohammad Anwar assumed command. In April 1965, 33 Heavy was stationed in Mansar Camp. On 5 May it was ordered to concentrate near mile 5 Wazirabad-Sialkot road. It was placed in support of 6 Armoured Division, but 124 Battery was detached and placed in support of 15 Division. On night 29/30 August 124 Battery was ordered to Assar in support of attack on Chamb. The battery occupied battle positions near Padhar at 0245 hours 1 September.

34 Heavy Regiment (8 inch howitzers) was made up of sub-units contributed by four old regiments. This of course was the normal drill laid down by Brig Morley for raising new units.

Regiment Headquarter -	By 21 Medium Regiment at Peshawar
126 Battery	22 Field Regiment at Nowshera
127 Battery	23 Field Regiment at Kohat
128 Battery	24 Field Regiment at Bannu.

The regiment assembled at Multan in January 1958 under the leadership of Lt Col Hameed Asghar Kiani. Hameed was a big, big hearted officer. He could talk saw-dust into life. The regiment loved him. In February 1965 Syed Muhammad Anwar Shirazi took over 34 Heavy. The regiment was stationed at Campbellpur. On 27 April it was placed on twelve hours notice, at .1500 hours 4 May on two hours notice, and on 5 May it moved out of Campbellpur. On 6 May the regiment concentrated in Wazirabad. On July 22 it was ordered to camp in Sialkot until further orders.

At 1100 hours 26 August 127 Battery was ordered to move to Padhar. Lt Col Shirazi accompanied the battery. The guns remained in a hide near Barnala till 27 August and at Rakh Miran till 31 August. At 1900 hours 31 August the 8 inch

howitzers quietly occupied their positions for the battle of Chamb.

The Artillery plan for the battles of Chamb and Dewa was bold as well meticulous. Medium guns and 8 inch howitzers were sited ahead of field guns. This bold measure was taken in order to dominate Indian guns in the very beginning of the battle. Indeed the Indian guns were forced to pull back at a critical stage of battle and could not provide adequate support to their troops in Chamb. A flash spotting base was deployed at Mattewala from where it could locate enemy guns in Chamb and Pallanwala. An air observer was assigned the task of dealing with opportunity targets in enemy rear. A section of 28 Medium with its own observer was given the task of dealing with Indian observation posts with white phosphorous smoke. Forward observers were reinforced by authorised observers on vantage points. The mixture of British and U.S. wireless sets was a noticeable handicap in getting fire orders through to the entire lot of fire units. However, a system of relays was arranged to speed up response. Also, the fine training of units and their anticipation of battle situation made up deficiencies in equipment.

Gun positions were occupied on night 30/31 August, 4 Corps Artillery command post was established near the guns in Padhar. 17 Corps Locating Regiment established its command post alongside, and also provided counter bombardment organisation.

At 0330 hours the first salvo of a ninety minute preparatory bombardment was shot off.

The Indians occupied higher ground from where they could observe our likely approaches. Nevertheless the entire exercise, from preparation of positions through deployment of guns and observation posts and to opening of fire, was carried out with unobtrusive efficiency. The enemy was surprised by the timing, accuracy and scale of our fire. And his surprise was witnessed by the weakness of his reaction during the assault phase. In ninety minutes bombardment 4 Corps Artillery justified the confidence of its author. From Dewa through Chamb to Burejal and across river Tawi each target received punishment from forty field guns, forty medium guns and eight heavy guns. Of course this concentration of fire is minute as compared to that obtained during World War II or Korea or Indo-China. But within the limited means of reconstituted 4 Corps Artillery we obtained the desired answer. The results of the bombardment vindicated the rationale of composing the two artillery groups; as also the ineptitude in their fragmentation on the eve of war.

Indian troops in Dewa and Chamb consisted of five infantry battalions, twenty four field guns, eight medium guns and approximately thirty tanks.

102 Brigade consisted of 8 Punjab, 9 Punjab and 13 Punjab. 2 Field Regiment was placed in direct support of 102 Brigade and 8 Medium with II Cavalry.

11 Cavalry was commanded by Lt Col Abdul Aziz Khan. It was concentrated near Gujranwala in July and moved to Kotla in the last week of August. The squadron commanders were briefed about the attack on 31 August. They had hardly had time to study their maps before H-hour. 11 Cavalry consisted of three squadrons. Alfa and Bravo squadrons were equipped with fourteen M48 tanks each. Charlie squadron had fourteen World War II vintage, rickety M36 B2 tanks destroyers. The epithet was rather a wishful title in the context of 1965 armour battle. M36 B2 was a 90 millimetre anti-tank gun mounted on Sherman chassis, the top of its turret covered with a 'tin' plate. The versions with Charlie squadron suffered another handicap. Their motors for power operation of turret had burnt out.

The approach to Chamb is gently rolling interspersed with mud villages, some sparse plantations and some brick kilns. The surface is hard. It is good tank country. It is also good for anti-tank guns which if skillfully deployed can make the tanks run into killing grounds.

Alpha squadron was commanded by Maj Inayat Ullah Asghar with Capt Sultan Ahmad as observer. Bravo squadron by Maj Raja Mohammad Iqbal with Maj Shad as observer. Lt Col Atta (8 Medium) rode an observer's tank alongside Lt Col Aziz's tank. And Atta had no complexes about engaging the enemy with corps artillery concentrations, whenever the opportunity occurred.

At 0500 hours 11 Cavalry led 102 Brigade attack on Chamb.

The plan envisaged Charlie squadron to advance from south through Chak Pandit and draw out enemy armour. Bravo squadron was to attack Chamb from north west and Alpha squadron was to be prepared to assist Bravo by attacking from north in case of such contingency.

Just before the start line Maj Raza Shah's M36 burnt out its clutch plate. This was the first of the four vehicles he had to change. The last change took place forward of Chak Pandit in full view of the enemy. Maj Raja Sarwar (8 Medium) kept enemy positions under fire during these changes. In the meantime 13 Punjab was held up by fire, presumably enemy tanks. Maj Raza Shah went to investigate. His M36 was hit by a recoil-less rifle cleverly sited in a plantation on flank of the south approach. Raja Sarwar immediately searched the plantation with repeated salvos of medium shells. At least one gun was hit, the remainder were abandoned. Thereafter Sarwar went to Raza Shah's vehicle. The M36 had exploded and everyone inside was killed, except the driver who was flung out of his seat. Raza Shah was a lithe, graceful figure, a pride of his regiment and a friend of friends.

Lt Col Aziz directed Alpha squadron to attack Chamb from south at top speed. The squadron did exactly that - top speed. On the way they were hit by a combination of Indian

AMX tanks and recoil-less rifles. The enemy nest was taken out by Capt Sultan with a corps artillery concentration.

As 102 Brigade advanced on Chamb they spotted a helicopter landing in the area. Half an hour later as our leading troops entered Chamb they found Maj Nasirullah Babar with about fifty Indian soldiers in tow. The Indians were still dazed from 4 Corps Artillery bombardment. When they saw Babar landing in their middle they waved white handkerchiefs.

At 1700 hours 111 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery guns were held tight to prevent their firing on own aircraft which were to attack positions across Tawi. At 1730 hours two Indian aircraft appeared on the scene, circled once, dived and struck at 28 Medium positions. Number 6 gun (98 Battery) was hit, the trail and sighting system were damaged, the ammunition caught fire and the battery lost four good gunners; Lance/Hav Muhammad Sher, Nk Amir Khan, Gunners Muhammad Rashid and Noor Muhammad. Maj Chishti walked upto the gun pit, his heartwarming voice, his earthiness, restored the men to the reality of serving guns.

Brig Hameed's troops occupied Dewa without meeting ill will. Dewa was a shambles. Our medium and heavy shells had levelled out discrimination between high and low. There were a number of charred skeletons of men, animals and

vehicles caught up when the petrol dump was hit with white phosphorous shells. Dewa was cleared up by 1400 hours

1September.

At 0915 hours 2 September Gen Musa arrived in 25 Brigade Headquarter. It was decided to hand over control of Chamb-Akhnur operations to 7 Division. It was quite apparent that Gen Akhtar Malik could not exercise the requisite control over operations from Kargil to Kotli and also from Chamb to Akhnur. The change of command took effect from 1400 hours

2 September. At the same time 7 Division Artillery assumed command of all artillery units except 28 Medium. 4 Corps Artillery continued to coordinate fire support.

Gen Yahya ordered 10 Brigade to establish bridgehead across Tawi. By mid-day tanks of 13 Lancers closed up on near bank and started peppering enemy positions across the river. As 14 Punjab reached Chak Pandit they were halted by the enemy artillery fire. 4 Corps Artillery reacted with its usual alacrity and handed out the necessary treatment. 6 Frontier Force and 14 Punjab were established across the river by 2000 hours 2 September.

Across Tawi Maj Bashir (2 Field Regiment) spotted two batteries worth of abandoned Indian field guns. These had been deployed at the base of a low hill rather close to each other. The ammunition vehicles were within fifty yards of the gun pits. One of these had been hit by 4 Corps Artillery

shelling. The resultant combustion, perhaps, forced the Indians to abandon guns. At least one gun pit had received a direct hit; the gun slewed over to one side, its barrel pointing at nothing. A dishevelled company cook house in Chamb with scattered chapatis witnessed the precipitate manner of Indian withdrawal.

10 brigade captured Pallanwala at 1100 hours 3 September. There was no opposition. By 1300 hours 97 Battery (27 Field) was in action across Tawi two thousand yards short of Pallanwala. The remainder of 27 Field joined up by 1700 hours. In anticipation of further advance Lt Col Jabbar sent the second-in-command, Maj Mohammad Sadiq, with the reconnaissance party to prepare positions three thousand yards ahead of Pallanwala. While the surveyors were busy establishing battery positions they came under heavy fire and returned to regiment position next morning. During the afternoon 2 Field, 39 Field, 8 Medium and 32 Battery (10 Medium) built up on 27 Field. Headquarter Artillery 7 Division moved into Chak Pandit and Headquarter Artillery

4 Corps into Chamb. The reconnaissance party of 39 Field finished preparing position south of Pallanwala just before sunset. As the party started to move back they were set upon with machine gun fire. The officer in charge prevented his men from firing back. Next morning it turned out that someone had mistaken them for the ubiquitous guerillas.

At 1100 hours Khaur and Pallanwala were captured. At 1130 hours Gen Yahya gave out his orders for capture of Jaurian, in sharp clear bursts, interspersed with jokes. Every

one was in high spirits. On 4 September Gen Musa met Gen Yahya at Headquarter 4 Corps Artillery in Chamb police station and reviewed progress of battle. Gen Musa complimented Amjad on the performance of artillery.

The enemy was now putting up stiff resistance along the main road Pallanwala-Jaurian-Chamb. Gen Yahya ordered 102 Brigade to advance along track Mandiala-Kalith-Akhnur. Kalith is about six thousand yards north of Jaurian. During the day there was some lively exchange of artillery fire, which enabled our sound rangers to accurately plot enemy positions. The same day 25 Field reached Gujrat by train from Quetta, and joined 6 Brigade.

8 and 9 Punjab (102 Brigade) moved through the hills on man-pack basis. On their south 13 Lancer tanks hugged the base of hills through terrain which was considered impassable for tanks by the Indians.

Kalith was occupied at 0530 hours 5 September and Sudan-Ki-Dhok at 1230 hours.

Artillery bombardment of Jaurian started at 0530 hours. As in the case of Chamb enemy targets had been located accurately and received severe punishment. From 10 Brigade, 14 Punjab captured Jaurian, and 6 Frontier Force

captured Troti on afternoon 5 September. Troti is a feature three thousand yards north-east of Jaurian. 13 Punjab was directed to capture Dalpat. About fifty Indian soldiers were

captured in Jaurian. They had been through our artillery bombardment. They stammered.

On the afternoon 5 September Capt Saudat along with Capt Zafar took off from Chak Pandit in a fixed wing observation plane. They were flying along the forward localities at a height of three hundred feet when they spotted Indian guns from their muzzle flashes. Saudat ranged, adjusted MP1 and ordered "fire for effect". As he watched the shells falling on enemy guns Zafar's voice came on the intercom, "Two Indian Hunters on our tail". The leader was about two thousand yards away. Saudat went down and towards the enemy. The first Hunter fired and missed. The second lined up and Saudat repeated avoiding tactics. The Hunters then lined up from opposite directions. Saudat got down to fifteen feet one of his wings scything the high grass. He had just pulled up when the Hunters appeared again. This time they were heading for home chased by two of our Air Force Sabre jets. But Saudat and Zafar had accomplished their mission. The Indian guns had already suffered through our preparatory bombardment. After engagement by Saudat and Zafar the Indians abandoned guns. We recovered eighteen guns and raised 40 Field Regiment with them.

At 1300 hours 124 Battery (155 millimetre guns) and 127 Battery (8 inch howitzers) moved from Chak Pandit and deployed in Khaur. 124 Battery engaged Akhnur. Gen Yahya who was present remarked,

"Next time I am going to tell the Heavies to lead the charge against enemy positions".

On 5 September at 0730 hours Gen Yahya was approaching Pallanwala in his helicopter. 110 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery was deployed in Khaur a thousand yards south of Pallanwala. The gunners saw half a dozen enemy aircraft coming out of the rising sun heading for Pallanwala. Hav Banaras immediately opened fire on the Indians until the general safely landed near the local police station. Gen Yahya shot at Brig Khursheed, "What the hell were your anti-aircraft gunners so angry about" ? Khursheed said, "There were six Indian Hunters gunning for you". Hav Banaras was recommended for-Tamgha-i-Jurat. Gen Yahya rewarded him with an immediate handshake of five hundred rupees.

At 1600 hours 5 September 88 Mortar Battery arrived at Munawar and joined 25 Field. On 6 September at 0800 hours troops in 7 Division learnt about Indian attack against Lahore and Sialkot from Radio Pakistan.

Forty eight hours before the Indian attack Maj Gen Sher Bahadur, Chief of General StarT,held a conference with Directors from all branches of General Headquarters. It was the first time these senior officers were informed about 'freedom fighters' and involvement of Pakistani troops in the fighting in Kashmir. Lt Col Riaz Ahmad (artillery), officer incharge Historical Section said, "The Indians are bound to react against Lahore and Sialkot. I hope we have taken

adequate precautions against such a contingency". He was answered by Brig Irshad Ahmad Khan, Director Military Intelligence, "We have been categorically assured by our Foreign Ministry that India will not start all out war. If the Indians do attack, the Americans and Chinese will come to our aid'.

It may be remembered that in 1965 the Kara Kurram highway did not exist. Forward of Swat, since 1961, our military engineers had been hacking out a jeep track with 'hammer and chisel'. Beyond Gilgit an uncertain yak trail connected Pakistan with Sinkiang. The Americans had warned us during the Rann of Kutch affair that in case of renewed fighting United States military assistance to Pakistan would be promptly switched off.

At 1030 hours 6 September Headquarter 7 Division Artillery took over command from Headquarter 4 Corps Artillery. The latter was ordered to move to Sialkot forthwith. Artillery units were divided between the two groups as follows :—

Units in Jaurian under 7 Division Artillery	Units which moved to Sialkot with 4 Corps Artillery
2 Field Regiment	39 Field Regiment
25 Field Regiment	8 Medium Regiment
27 Field Regiment	127 Battery - 34 Heavy Regiment (8 inch howitzers)
28 Medium Regiment	111 Battery (29 Light Anti- Aircraft Regiment)

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 124 Battery - 33 Heavy
Regiment (155 millimetre
guns) | 17 Corps Locating
Regiment |
| 88 Mortar Battery | |
| 110 Battery (29 Light Anti-
Aircraft Regiment | |
| 107 Division Locating Battery | |

Headquarter 7 Division Artillery moved into Pallanwala on 6 September.

Enemy aircraft paid particular attention to our gun areas on this day. During one of the attacks a gun from 28 Medium was damaged. But for the antiaircraft fire there might have been more damage. Every time enemy aircraft appeared there was the most determined retaliation from our anti-aircraft gunners. The mixture of .50 quadruples and 40 millimetre guns both confused and deterred the enemy pilots. Enemy attacks were reduced to erratic runs.

By afternoon 6 September 10 Brigade and 13 Lancers closed upto Mawa Wali K.had, a five hundred yards wide seasonal nullah, about five miles short of Akhnur. On 8 September 6 Brigade took over the front from 10 Brigade which left for Sialkot. An hour past midnight 9/10 September troops of 6 Brigade, on Mawa Wali Khad (6 Punjab, 15 Punjab and 8 Baluch) were subjected to preparatory bombardment by the Indians. By 0430 hours enemy troops were seen in Nainwala in front of 8 Baluch and 15 Punjab positions. This is an open area between two branches of

Mawa Wali Khad where the nullah joins Chenab river. In three divisional artillery concentrations the attackers were treated with fourteen hundred shells. It was enough. The Indians left over a hundred dead infantry and at least one tank. Gen Yahya conveyed 'Well done' to all artillery units.

On 12 September 15 Punjab with squadron 13 Lancers was ordered to capture Nainwala-Devipur along Partap canal/ The squadron was commanded by Maj Sultan. Capt Mahmud Akhtar was forward observer with Bravo Company of 15 Punjab. The attacking troops assembled at 1330 hours, were across the start line at 1400 hours and were on the objective by 1700 hours. There was very little opposition except for enemy artillery fire. During reorganisation on objective Maj Sultan was moving around in his jeep when hit by an enemy tank shell. Sultan and his party were killed. In the meantime Capt Mahmud was taking opportunity targets. During one of his shoots he moved over to a vantage point for better observation. He was immediately spotted. A shell landed five yards from his position. Wireless operator Haider Ali was instantly killed. Technical 1 Assistant Faiz Ahmad and Capt Mahmud were badly wounded. The casualties had to walk for forty minutes before they reached an aid post. Mahmud had been wounded in the eye and stomach. He was deservedly awarded Sitara-i-Jurat.

Capt Zareen 32 Battery (10 Medium) was forward observer with 13 Lancers during attack on Devipur.

Zareen moved his jeep among armoured vehicles unaware of his nakedness, almost unconcerned with hostile fire, his eyes searching for trouble-some targets, his brain ticking out target data. The Indians engaged him with machine guns and artillery fire. Nothing touched Zareen. Eventually the enemy brought out a recoil-less rifle. The shot got the jeep square in the face. There was nothing left.

During the ensuing week the Indians made several attempts to dislodge us from Mawa Wali Khad. They were punished. Gen Yahya and Brig Eftekhar were unstinting in their compliments to the Regiment of Artillery.

Sialkot (Map No. 2)

15 Division was responsible for the defence of Sialkot, from Marala in the north through Shakargarh and Jassar in the west; a front of approximately 180,000 yards. The division had four infantry brigades two armoured regiments, one equipped with M47 tanks and the other with World War II vintage Shermans. 6 Armoured Division was located near Daska as a counter-attack force. This division was no more than an up-graded brigade. It had three armour regiments, one artillery regiment and one infantry battalion. The service elements were in keeping with a brigade group.

All troops employed in Sialkot area were grouped under 1 Corps commanded by Lt Gen Bakhtiar Rana.

The general was a familiar, cigar chomping, robust figure whose company was sought after and whose presence enlivened any gathering.

The shape of the border from Marala to Maqboolpur is a liability as much as an asset. In terms of defence the area involves a front of about 250,000 yards where surface conditions permit large scale military movement. There are no lateral obstacles to retard Indian attack from north against Sialkot, Pasrur, Narowal and Shakargarh. The nullahs run from Indian territory towards south and south-west. Although these are fordable in several places they do protect the flanks of advancing columns, and obstruct counter attacks by the defender.

The main water obstacles are in rear of Sialkot. The city itself is within field artillery range of Indian territory. But the attacker does not have to capture Sialkot. Indian advance running east and south of Sialkot can be synchronised with attack across Ravi from Dera Nanak. These two together would unhinge any forces defending Sialkot-Lahore, and give the attacker a significant, perhaps decisive, tactical and strategic advantage. Any counter attack force positioned for defence of Sialkot is likely to be either fragmented or caught in an unintended battle.

There is a seemingly attractive alternative, that is to base defence on Marala-Ravi link and Bomban Wala-Ravi-Bedian canals, in rear of Sialkot. This indeed amounts to a gratuitous award to the attacker of the very advantage he would have otherwise to fight for.

But an adequate defence of Sialkot - Pasrur - Narowal-Shakargarh would consume minimum of three divisions for holding forward defences, another two for counter attack, and still the battle would be fought on Pakistan soil. An offensive attitude offers several fruitful objectives of which the most attractive are Jammu, Samba, Kathua and Gurdaspur. In this case the predicament of uneconomic, unfavourable defence would be imposed on the enemy. Such an offensive would, of course, require concentration of our armour, artillery and air power providing for paralysis of enemy reaction in the opening stages of war.

15 Division was deployed as follows:—

101 Brigade — Astride road Sialkot-Jammu with 4 Field, 18 Field less Battery, 90 Mortar Battery less troop.

24 Brigade — Area Charwa with 31 Field less Battery.

115 Brigade — Jassar with 47 Battery 31 Field and Troop 90 Mortar Battery.

9 Baluch — Chaprar with 40 Field Battery (18 Field).

104 Brigade — Division striking force.

Each brigade had a front of approximately 30,000 yards. Naturally there were large gaps between

brigades where the terrain was by no means impervious to hostile attack. Artillery effort was accordingly scattered. At very few points on the front a concentration of more than three batteries could be obtained. The extent of frontage rendered command and control of artillery at divisional level rather tenuous. Communications were stretched beyond the limit where they could be efficiently maintained in battle.

The distended deployment of artillery units resulted in panic regrouping according as enemy threats developed, fancied or otherwise. For example : 18 Field Regiment had 40 Battery deployed on Chaprar road. The remainder of regiment was in village Bhoth 15,000 yards south of 40 Battery. On

6 September at 1100 hours orders were received to send 41 Battery and a skeleton headquarters to Jassar. Fifteen minutes later when they were already on move the orders for headquarters were cancelled. Only 41 Battery was to proceed to Jassar. Maj Hashim Khan, second-in-command 18 Field, accompanied the battery. On 26 August 8 Medium Regiment, 124 Battery (33 Heavy Regiment) and 127 Battery (34 Heavy Regiment) were ordered to move to Chamb in support of 7 Division. 8 Medium and 127 Battery returned to Sialkot at 1930 hours 6 September.

39field Regiment was raised on 10 May 1965. On 7 June it deployed in Jassar in direct support of 115 Brigade. On 11 July it moved back to Sialkot and on 23 July moved to Kharian as part of the reconstituted 4 Corps Artillery. From

15 August to 5 September it participated in the battles of Chamb and Jaurian. On night 5/6 September it moved into Sialkot. On 7 September at 2230 hours 39 Field less two batteries moved to Narowal. Here the regiment was made up with its own 145 Battery, 41 Battery (18 Field), 47 Battery (31 Field) and troop 90 Mortar Battery. During the next twelve hours 39 Field moved to Marala-Ravi link and back two times. On 9 September it deployed in village Musalmanian where it remained till 23 September.

On 7 September 33 Heavy less battery was deployed in Sialkot. One gun of 125 Battery was despatched to Narowal to shoot across Jassar bridge. En route the gun was attacked by enemy aircraft, and its tractor damaged. The gun was recovered and joined its battery at 2200 hours. Throughout the afternoon and evening of 7 September the regiment moved back and forth in keeping with the tune of opening stage of war. At 0800 hours 8 September the unit had hardly come into action in Dudian when it was ordered back into its positions in Sialkot as on 31 August. The move was carried out during night 8/9 September when the Indian attacks were in full swing and the whole of Sialkot cantonment was being shelled. Nevertheless 33 Heavy came into action and fired its first round at 0300 hours 9 September. Hav Khalas Khan, gun commander in 125 Battery, was an inspiration to watch under fire. He was recognised with Tamgha-i-Jurat.

On 6 September 34 Heavy Regiment less 127 Battery

was deployed in Sialkot. 127 Battery was committed in Chamb. On 6 September 127 Battery rejoined 34 Heavy Regiment but that same evening 126 Battery was detached and sent to Chawinda to operate under 4 Corps Artillery.

On afternoon 31 August Brig Ameer Ahmad, commander artillery 15 Division, rang up unit commanders and ordered occupation of battle positions. All moves were to be carried out during hours of darkness; no move before last light 1 September 1965. But on 1 September at about 0700 hours Ameer was on the line again, "Occupy positions forthwith". After the occupation of positions there was hardly anything to do except listen to Pakistani, Indian and BBC news broadcasts. After each session there was excited chatter about righting in Chamb-Jaurian. There was even some betting about the chances of war. The troops in the field were less detached from reality than General Headquarters. They were not convinced that India would conform to our interpretation of attack on Chamb.

On 5 September All India Radio in its hourly broadcasts warned listeners to stand by for an important announcement during the ensuing twenty four hours. Indeed the general tone of Indian broadcasts left little doubt that war was not far away.

Sometime during that fateful night our GHQ issued a signal warning all formations, in view of Indian broadcast, to "Be vigilant". Of course "Be vigilant" is not included in military

vocabulary, and therefore not defined in terms of any military action to be undertaken on its receipt. Under the circumstances Maj Gen Sarfraz (10 Division) and Maj Gen Hamid (11 Division) queried if they were to occupy forward defences. The answer was, "Negative. Occupation of forward defences will constitute provocation for India to attack'*'. Fortunately most commanders followed their own instinct.

15 Division had Lt Col Hameed Asghar Kiani as staff officer responsible for logistics. Early in May Hameed, with commendable foresight, had a set of underground shelters prepared to accommodate division headquarters during war. He also stocked Sialkot with plenty of artillery ammunition. The underground headquarters could not, for ever, remain unlocated by enemy intelligence. During the battle for Sialkot it was frequently shelled, bombed and rocketted, but continued to operate without serious interruption. Hameed was fond of good food and with him incharge of logistics 15 Division was never short of anything, just anything. On 8 September Maj Gen Tikka Khan assumed command of 15 Division and brought Brig Sheikh Aslam as commander artillery. It may be remembered that the two officers had been together in the Rann of Kutch.

The first attack in Sialkot area came against Jassar bridge on night 5/6 September at 0330 hours. It was a diversionary attack. But 115 Brigade was out on a

limb with a total of six field guns and six 120 millimetre mortars on a front of 30,000 yards. And in the opening stages of war the first Indian attack, understandably, assumed mass.

31 Field Regiment was raised by Lt Col Khalil Ahmad Khan in May 1957 at Nowshera. Khalil was a competent gunner and extremely humane. His good nature brought good fortune to the regiment in that it attracted a succession of excellent gunners for commanding officers. Khalil was followed by Mohammad Aslam M. C, Shah Mohammad, Mian Mansoor, followed by Aslam (Tojo) and in 1971 by Muzaffar Ali Khan Zahid. The regiment got its first taste of battle in March 1964 when the Indians tried to test our reaction through a jab at Dudial and Rangoor in Sialkot. From 5 to 8 March the Indians fired at our positions without much concern about our retaliation. During this period Lt Col Shah Mohammad ordered his observers to restrict themselves only to location of enemy positions. For retaliation Shah Mohammad had prepared a series of gun positions. On 9 March Indian locations were shelled from position to position until they called it a day. The exercise provided good initiation for the coming battles of 1965.

At 0330 hours 6 September Indian troops closed on Jassar bridge. 3 Punjab (115 Brigade) had a company across the bridge who were without any artillery officer. Under severe hostile shelling and finding themselves unable to retaliate the company withdrew. In the meantime Maj Mohammad Ayub, 47 Battery, walked upto the bridge and engaged the Gurkhas,

who were hesitantly approaching from the far side. For almost three hours Ayub kept the enemy in their place with well placed Pakistani shells. Thereafter Capt Raja Asghar (3 Punjab) led the assault. Nineteen Gurkhas surrendered. The company of 3 Punjab was reinforced by a company from 4 Frontier Force and 41 Battery (18 Field) was despatched to reinforce 47 Battery.

Maj Hashim an energetic Pathan from Hazro was second-in-command 18 Field. Some paternal emotion made him accompany 41 Battery to 115 Brigade. At 0130 hours 7 September the enemy launched second attack against Jassar, this time supported by tanks and aircraft. Our two companies across the bridge had to withdraw and the battalion commander 3 Punjab ordered the bridge blown. The rear parties had to swim back. At this difficult juncture Capt Hamid Ullah Sumbal and Sub Abdul Hamid, observers with forward companies, carried out some shooting practice and Hashim's headquarters provided the necessary fire control. Later on during the day 24 Brigade Headquarters with 2 Punjab and 25 Cavalry was despatched to the scene to destroy any enemy venturing across river Ravi. The opportunity did not arise. Thereafter the fighting in this area settled down to artillery exchanges.

On 9 September 39 Field Regiment less two batteries arrived from Chamb and took over 41 and 47 Field Batteries and troop 90 Mortar Battery. On 10 September 47 Battery

was moved forward to Musalmanian, one thousand yards north of Jassar. There was some hot exchange of fire. During a lull between shooting Capt Sumbal washed himself, put on fresh uniform and facing kaaba kissed the Pakistani earth. At that time the Indians started some harassing fire, and while Sumbal continued to pray a searching Indian shell found him. Sumbal was a lively character and his conduct during the previous five days had given magic to his name. His battery, his regiment, 115 Brigade, all those he had worked with mourned his loss. Sumbal's father did not weep. He said, "Don't you know, Hamid was not killed".

4 Field was commanded by Lt Col Nazar Hussain. Immediately before the war Nazar was hospitalised with a heart stroke. On the declaration of war all training establishments were closed and its personnel posted to field units. Lt Col Haider Jang hurried from Staff College Quetta to take over command of 4 Field. The regiment was deployed in direct support of 101 Brigade covering Sialkot-Jammu road. On 7 September at about 1600 hours an observer reported enemy concentrations near octroi post north of village Jolan. The information was conveyed to Headquarters 15 Division with request for permission to engage the concentration. Permission was denied, "Refrain from any provocative action".

The observer was ordered to merely observe and not to fire unless permitted to do so by the General

Officer Commanding. Indian bombardment started at 2230 hours and under its cover the enemy made contact with our covering positions. As soon as the Indian bombardment started the observer again requested permission to open fire. The permission came through at 2240 hours and every gun within range sought out the enemy. At 0230 hours 8 September the covering troops were withdrawn and 4 Field was deployed in support of the main position.

Throughout the morning of 8 September the Indian concentrations were broken up with observed fire. At 0600 hours an air observer reported Indian armour advancing from Saidan-Wala to Ura bridge on Aik nullah, three miles south-east of Sialkot. A squadron of 31 Tank Delivery Unit (Shermans) was ordered to secure Ura bridge forthwith. In the meantime the air observer engaged enemy armour with 2 Field, 4 Field and 8 inch howitzers of 34 Heavy Regiment in area Akalgarh, Kalarawanda and Haripur. A number of tanks linked up with 8 inch howitzers shells, and thereafter the Indians contended themselves with some harassing fire with a section of medium guns.

34 Heavy was commanded by Lt Col Syed Mohammad Anwar Shirazi. Anwar's family had been living in Sialkot since the days of Emperor Jehangir. Indian attack on Sialkot was therefore a personal challenge. Throughout the battle Anwar ran from gun position to gun position, from observation post to observation post to make sure that his regiment stood by his beloved city. Some of Anwar's

class mates from school days turned up at his gun position carrying loads of Sialkot delicacies and garlands for the 8 inch howitzers. One gentleman, a wrestler by profession, told Shirazi "Your chaps must be getting tired. Let me do the loading". And to prove his point he took off his loose muslin shirt and hefted a 200 pounds shell single handed. The 8 inch howitzer was just the gun for the large hearted Sialkotis.

At mid-day 6 September 4 Corps Artillery was ordered to move from Jaurian to Sialkot forthwith. As they were crossing river Tawi some Indian Hunter aircraft attacked the convoy. The Indians managed to hit one vehicle before they were chased away by our Sabre jets. As the guns arrived in Sialkot from Chamb they were deployed to reinforce 15 Division Artillery on 24 and 101 Brigade fronts.

At 1400 hours 7 September 4 Corps Artillery was placed in support of 6 Armoured Division. At the same time Brig Amjad was called up by Gen Rana and ordered to do something to prevent enemy coming across Jassar. By 0200 hours 8 September, when a medium battery, a sound ranging base and the bulk of heavy guns had been deployed in area Narowal, information was received about Indian attack on Charwa. Thereupon 4 Corps Artillery was ordered to move back to 6 Armoured Division area between Pasrur and Daska. The guns of 4 Corps Artillery remained idle throughout 8 September. By the evening Amjad secured permission from Maj Gen Abrar, GOC 6 Armoured Division, to carry out some counter-bombardment in Sialkot.

On 7 September 18 Field consisted of its own 42 Battery and 114, 143 batteries from 39 Field Regiment. On night 7/8 September it was deployed in support of 101 Brigade, in area Bhoth a mile north of Sialkot cantonment. The Indian attack across Suchetgarh started at 2245 hours.

Indian 1 Corps detailed to attack through Sialkot consisted of 1 Armoured Division, 6 Mountain Division, 14 Division and 26 Division. Artillery support consisted of the divisional artillery brigades, 1 Corps Artillery Brigade, and perhaps some army artillery. 1 Corps plan called for attack by 26 Division across Suchetgarh. This was to be followed by 6 Mountain Division attack through Marajke and Charwa. Thereafter 1 Armoured Division was to break out to capture Chawinda-Pasrur. 14 Division was to guard left flank of 1 Armoured Division.

At 1500 hours 8 September GOC 15 Division ordered 104 Brigade to attack Indian positions at Suchetgarh Niwe-Wain. 9 Baluch supported by 20 Lancers less squadron and squadron TDU crossed the start line at 0510 hours. 18 Field was placed in direct support of the attacking group. When 20 Lancers reached Palkhu nullah they were held up by a combination of difficult terrain and heavy enemy fire. Maj Lodhi, battery commander with 20 Lancers, weaved through the tanks in his command jeep. As he came up to Palkhu

enemy machine guns picked up his jeep. Lodhi was wounded in the right arm and chest. Some bullets went through the wireless set and killed the operator.

In the meantime 17 Corps Locating Regiment had deployed a sound ranging base west of Sialkot. The base located twelve hostile batteries. At about midnight Brig Amjad brought 33 and 34 Heavy Regiments into action. With these and every other available gun the hostile batteries were engaged upto 0330 hours 9 September. 26 Indian Division did not proceed beyond Suchetgarh. 4 Corps Artillery then redeployed to fire in support of 24 Brigade in the battles of Chobara and Gadgore.

At 2215 hours 7 September Sub Mohammad Anwar and N/Sub Ghulam Nabi (31 Field) picked up enemy concentration across the border from Mahrajke. The two officers engaged the concentrations till about midnight and then withdrew along with their supported battalion towards Khanewal.

On night 7/8 September L/Nk Noor Hussain was member of an observer party at Mahrajke. He was driver of the observation officer's jeep. When the post was over-run Noor calmly joined the advancing enemy columns and at the first opportunity slipped through and made for his regiment. In spite of his narrow escape he insisted on going along with observer party of Lt Matlub. His reason, "I know what the Indians are about".

Lt Matlub established his post on a tree top, an obvious place attracting attention. There was nowhere else to go. The expected happened. Matlub was spotted. An enemy shell wounded Matlub and his technical assistant Manzoor. Signal operator Sakhi Mohammad was killed. Noor picked up the casualties and rushed them to regimental aid post. Next day Noor joined yet another observer party, this time with his battery commander Maj Majid Niazi. Noor seemed indestructible in spite of the risks he took. Perhaps some compulsion impelled him towards the end of his life. On the last day of war he was killed while getting first aid to a comrade. It was God's will.

On 7/8 September night at another observation post at Mahrajke technical assistant Mohammad Gulzar continued to bring fire on the enemy until he himself was killed.

The area between Charwa and Mahrajke was held by our covering troops. Nevertheless the Indians took six hours to advance two miles. Thereafter they grew more cautious. By mid-day their leading elements were probing towards Gadgore and Chobara when they were hit by 25 Cavalry and every artillery piece within range. The tanks fought at close range and the battle was over in five minutes. About thirty Indian tanks were left burning on the scene. As the Indians withdrew towards north they were caught up by our Air Force and a few more tanks spilled their innards. 25 Cavalry was gallantly led by Nisar "Kaka". It was equally gallantly supported by Maj Majid, Maj Rajab Butt and Capt Jahanzeb.

By morning 9 September 4 Corps Artillery had withdrawn from Suchetgarh front and been redeployed to support 24 Brigade. Throughout 9 and 10 September the Indians made hesitant steps towards Chobara and Gadgore and each time they paid in terms of tanks hit by medium and heavy guns of 4 Corps Artillery. At 2200 hours 9 September 33 Heavy went into action in Burike to engage targets in Chobara. On 10 September it deployed in Badiana. Its observers were affiliated to 14 (Para) Brigade deployed in Zafarwal. On 13 September 4 Frontier Force position came under attack. Maj Dilawar Butt, 125 Battery, saw a prize target and reacted in the only way an artillery observer is trained to do. Five enemy tanks were destroyed and the rest veered off.

During night 9/10 September the Commander-in-Chief Gen Musa rang up Brig Amjad and congratulated 4 Corps Artillery on their achievement in Chamb-Jaurian. The General added, "I hope you stamp your mark on the Indians with the same precision as you did in Chamb".

But even before 4 Corps Artillery arrived on the scene fate led 1 (SP) Field Regiment to succour 31 Field. The two regiments had blood ties. 1 (SP) was converted from 1 Mountain to a self-propelled unit in 1957. In doing so it was reduced to three batteries. It retained 1 Jacob's, 2 Kohat and 3 Peshawar batteries. 4 Lahore Battery went to join the newly raised 31 Field Regiment. In 1964 1 (SP)

exchanged its 105 millimetre guns with World War II vintage 25 pounders from 3 (SP) Field Regiment. 1 (SP) joined 100 Armoured Brigade Group in Nowshera. That same year 100 Armoured Brigade was redesignated as 6 Armoured Division with 1 (SP) comprising its entire divisional artillery. The regiment was commanded by Lt Col 'Chota' Rahman; unassuming and also unforgiving of shoddy performance. He was assisted by Maj Rashid, a large hearted Rajput, without complexes and without any shade of grey.

On 26 April 1965, 6 Armoured Division was placed on twelve hours notice, an indication of chronic myopia at echelons where fore-sight is an imperative requirement. Fortunately the division did not have long to wait. On 4 May it was ordered to move to Gujranwala. At this time the batteries of 1 (SP) were affiliated as follows :—

1 Jacob's	—	11 Cavalry
2 Kohat	—	13 Lancers
3 Peshawar	—	Guides Cavalry

On the afternoon 6 September, 6 Armoured Division was ordered to move to Pasrur as 1 Corps reserve. In the evening when some elements were past start point it was ordered to turn back and go to Jamke-Sambrial road. On evening 8 September Gen Rana rang up Maj Gen Abrar Hussain, "Destroy all enemy penetration east of Marala-Ravi Link canal".

At 0500 hours 9 September 1 (SP) reconnaissance party led by Maj Rashid (second-in-command) arrived in Chawinda to prepare positions for reception of guns. An hour later as the guns were coming into action they were attacked by three Indian fighters. Fortunately the planes seemed to be in a hurry and after one pass turned back home. On seeing the guns of 1 (SP) the men and women of Chawinda came out of their shell torn homes and greeted the gunners with pitchers of lassi. Oblivious of danger they swarmed around the guns. Maj Rashid took hold of an old woman, "Mother. Don't worry you will be alright". She shot back, "Of course we will be alright. That is why we are both here, my son".

As soon as the deployment was completed Lt Col Rahman contacted 25 Cavalry at Gadgore and offered the services of his regiment. 25 Cavalry was already being supported by 31 Field but an additional eighteen guns were more than welcome. While the two commanding officers were sipping ritual tea, information was received about an Indian attack developing from the direction of Chobara. Rahman went forward from where he could observe fire, and without preliminaries ordered a regimental salvo, again, and again. Three Indian tanks were hit, and in the excitement of first kill Rahman shot off two more salvos.

The Pakistani gunner is in the habit of kissing the

first round before it is loaded; also a quick prayer that the round seek its target. It is a good habit. The first salvos of 1 (SP) justified the habit.

1 (SP) on its own initiative was reinforcing 31 Field Regiment. Since the observers of 1 (SP) had not been deployed Rahman sought out a battery commander of 31 Field and informed him that fire of this regiment was at their disposal. He then had communications established with 31 Field and 8 Medium. At one time when communication with 31 Field broke down a despatch rider arrived in 1 (SP) command post with a slip of paper :—

"Uniform Target. Grid reference 96701088 Height 800 feet. OT-BT. 50 tanks 15 rounds gunfire. Fire on receipt of Chit. Thanks".

1 (SP) Regiment responded with all their hearts.

On 10 September 1 (SP) went forward and deployed near Alowal. On this day the regiment suffered its first casualty. Hav Salam Kabir, an East Pakistani, was killed while manning his gun. His blood enriched the earth of Chawinda, reinforcing the spirit of our creation.

11 September is the death anniversary of the Quaid-e-Azam. For 1 (SP) it is also a day when the regiment established spiritual identity with the father of Pakistan. On this day Col Rahman gave his life for the country for whose creation the Quaid-e-Azam worked himself to death. Rahman began his day, as usual, with morning prayers and a recitation of the Holy

Quran. In the regimental command post he talked to the officers and men about the course of war, something unusual for him. He said, "Let me tell you where our line of defence is. It is right here. And this is the only line. You give up this line and you give up Pakistan. Another thing. Our regiment was the first in action in 1947-48. I hope you bear that in mind". While he was talking a salvo from enemy guns landed a short distance away and was promptly answered by the guns of 4 Corps Artillery.

2 Indian Armoured Brigade was attacking Gadgore. 11 Cavalry, which had come up from Chamb, was ordered to deal with Indian threat. Rahman went over to 11 Cavalry command vehicle. Hastily a counter attack plan was prepared, and Rahman started transmitting orders for the fire support plan. Halfway through a sentence the adjutant, Capt Gulab Khan, jerked his head. There was an ear-splitting crack, then nothing. A medium artillery salvo from enemy guns had landed close by. The commanding officer 1 (SP) was killed out-right; his driver L/Nk Aslam and wireless operator Akram were seriously wounded. Col Aziz (11 Cavalry) and his second-in-command Maj Muzaffar Malik were also seriously wounded. Rahman was posthumously awarded Sitara-i-Jurat, and his memory endures in the proud tradition he left with 1 (SP) Field Regiment.

The regiment had little time to mourn the loss of its commanding officer. Within the hour the enemy renewed attack. Capt Gul Badshah was manning an observation

post with Charlie Company 9 Frontier Force. The Indian attack focussed his excitement. It was Badshah's first shoot at live targets and in spite of his excitement he followed the book. He was not disappointed. The Indians switched their attack to a neighbouring company.

As the Indian tanks scurried through 3 Frontier Force positions the artillery observer, Lt Quddus, refrained from firing for fear of hitting own troops. But he could not just sit around." He commandeered a recoil-less rifle and directed its fire at the tanks. The first found its target. As the gun switched to another tank it was hit by a high explosive shell. Quddus was wounded in both legs and cited for Sitara-i-Jurat. At about mid-day it was decided to launch a counter-attack in order to relieve pressure against Phillaurah-Gadgore. Guides Cavalry was detailed for the job.

Guides Cavalry was commanded by Lt Col Amir Gulistan a Janjua Rajput who led his tanks in battle with the elan of his ancestors, the horsemen from Central Asia. Amir Gulistan was assisted by Maj Fazal-i-Haq, a Yusufzai Pathan from Swabi, an officer with well rounded military education. In September 1965 Fazli was in Karachi commanding President's Body Guard. On 6 September he and his family were travelling by train from Karachi to Peshawar. Near Raiwind the train made an unscheduled halt, and Fazli learnt about Indian attack against Lahore. He left the train at Gujranwala, told his family to proceed to Peshawar and hitch hiked his way to Guides by midnight 6 September. 11 Cavalry

had arrived from Jaurian forty eight hours earlier. It was rushed to Gadgore where it ran into 2 Indian Armoured Brigade.

On 8 September Brig Hissam-El-ErTendi had been appointed as second-in-command to GOC 6 Armoured Division. Hissam was a grandson of Sardar Ayub Khan the ruler of Afghanistan, June 1880 to September 1881. He was gifted with a striking, unforgettable personality and the instincts of a born cavalryman. When the crisis developed in Gadgore Hissam got on to Fazli, "Lead your Guides to the sound o.f guns". There was little time for elaborate planning. Fazli lined up the Guides along railway embankment at Alhar and gave orders to charge.

The Indians were waiting.

Maj Abbasi rode his tank with turret open. A medium air-burst hit him and the next moment a recoil-less rifle set fire to the tank. Lt Hussain Shah, second-in-command to Abbasi, rushed forward and met similar fate. Hussain Shah was the son of Col Pir Abdulla Shah, a very popular and respected armour officer. After the battle Fazli went to Abbasi's tank. There was nothing inside except ashes and some charred bones.

Maj Latif the second squadron commander sat on top of his tank, his swollen legs dangling on the

side of open turret. His stomach was pierced with a bullet. As Fazli stopped to assess damage an old man crawled out of a mud house and started making conversation. Fazli said, "Baba, you go back you will get killed". The old man shook his head, "This is my home". A moment later the old man was sprayed over the area by a medium shell.

The battle had been short but intense. The Guides might have suffered more casualties but for the reaction of Maj Mustafa Jan. Within minutes he had every gun within range on enemy positions and the Guides came out. The opposing tanks leaguered for the night. Next morning the Guides discovered Indian tanks leaguered about fifteen hundred yards away. Both sides had gone through the night drugged with the sleep of exhaustion, unaware of the presence of one another.

In spite of casualties the enemy tanks made to Phillaurah. The positions of 1 (SP) and 8 Medium were threatened. Maj Rashid, who had taken over command of 1 (SP), decided to leave 3 Peshawar Battery with Guides Cavalry and ordered 1 Jacob's and 2 Kohat to pull back. Rashid stayed with 3 Peshawar. This battery joined the regiment after dark. In 8 Medium Lt Col Atta and his second-in-command Maj Shakir Kiani rushed to the gun position when there was 'tank alert'. Atta himself directed the fire of 8 Medium to delay the tanks. The batteries were leap-frogged to the rear while Atta remained with the rearmost battery.

In 31 Field area Indian tanks got within range for direct fire and were thus engaged by Sub Abdul Hakim, the gun position officer of 4 Lahore Battery. Maj Ghulam Mohammad, second-in-command, watched the battle for an opportunity to withdraw the guns to safety. But there was no such thing as absolute lull. When the tanks withdrew enemy artillery peppered the area. Ghulam Mohammad risked the gauntlet. The guns were withdrawn without haste, without frantic shouting, with smooth efficiency, and with pride. In the evening the gun detachments were rewarded with Ghulam Mohammad's rare smile.

On 12 September a task force of Guides and a squadron 22 Cavalry was sent to hit the Indian flank in Bhagowal. Towards the afternoon squadron 22 Cavalry charged at Kaga, west of Bhagowal, in the time honoured cavalry tradition. Unfortunately the enemy kept his nerve and the squadron was caught in well aimed fire. Lt Nazar, artillery observer with the squadron, called for fire. The call was heard by Maj Mustafa Jan, Capt Ismail and Capt Bashir. These experienced officers read the urgency in Nazar's call and relayed it to 4 Corps and 15 Division Artillery. Within minutes hundreds of shells shouted their response to the excited observer and the beleaguered squadron. After the first salvo Maj Mustafa Jan got an air observer to ensure that the shells got their targets.

To Lt Nazar the response from 4 Corps and 15 Division Artillery brought an appreciation of the dimensions of the brotherhood called the Regiment of Artillery.

By 13 September the Indians had secured Bhagowal-Zafarwal. Gen Rana appreciated that the enemy would next concentrate against Chawinda. The estimate was confirmed from a captured Indian operation order of 1 Armoured Brigade Group. This formation had been given the task to capture Chawinda and in the process destroy 'remainder' of our 6 Armoured Division by morning 14 September. In their own estimate the Indians had already destroyed a major portion of 6 Armoured Division. They would learn the truth on the afternoon of this same day.

The Indian attack started with a preparatory bombardment. 1 (SP) being more exposed received warm attention. 1 Jacob's Battery suffered six casualties. But the gunners never wavered in servicing their guns. The gun position officer, Sub Mohammad Shah, gave out fire orders from outside his command post, from where the gunners could see him and where he was more exposed to hostile fire than the gun detachments. Indian tanks rolled forward from Wazirwali - Kalewali in the afternoon. The attack hit 14 Baluch and 3 Frontier Force at 1530 hours, perhaps in an effort to catch the defenders in after-lunch siesta. But after the Indian bombardment only the dead could continue to sleep.

In 14 Baluch the Indians got into some of our forward localities. Nearby Capt Jahanzeb watched the skirmish and quietly brought fire on own positions, keeping the attackers at bay and enabling own troops to extricate themselves. By the evening 14 September Indians had cut the railway line Sialkot-Chawinda and occupied villages Alhar, Jassoran and Fatehpur. The same evening Amjad ordered 1 (SP) to move to Mateke. The displacement was carried out by batteries, 1 Jacob's being the last to displace. On 15 September the Indians renewed attack on Chawinda. Just short of Chawinda enemy infantry started digging, perhaps to engage our forward localities with direct fire. Maj Maj id Niazi (31 Field) spotted them and engaged with airburst from guns of 1 (SP), 31 Field and 8 Medium. The dose proved quite adequate.

Charlie squadron 22 Cavalry was deployed for defence of Bagowal-Badiana axis. Capt Bashir 1 (SP), newly promoted, joined the squadron as observer. His battery commander Capt Ismail called him up, "Bashir, stay close to your squadron commander. Today he needs your fire support more than ever before. Let us not hear that 1 (SP) were wanting". As the Indian attack came Bashir saw over forty enemy tanks trading shots with nine tanks of squadron Charlie. Bashir called for "Uniform Target", all the guns of 4 Corps Artillery. He got only six guns of his own battery. 4 Corps Artillery was busy on other priority targets. Of course six 25 pounder shells made no impression on Indian armour. Bashir decided to use his

observer tank in the shoot out. He positioned the tank under a banyan tree, the hull sheltered by a mud wall. The tank crew were armour men and knew their job. Bashir directed the fire and made three kills.

In the meantime the squadron commander's tank was hit and Bashir lost contact. After his three kills Bashir decided to move to another position with better protection for the tank. While thus engaged the tank stalled in a ditch. Daffadar Gul Badshah jumped out of the tank, oblivious of hostile fire. By hand signals he enabled the driver to get the tank out of trouble. Gul Badshah pointed out the squadron commandar's tank with its barrel at an un-natural angle. There was no other friendly tank in sight. The daffadar went over to the squadron commander's tank and informed Bashir that the tank had been hit and abandoned. Bashir said, "The squadron commander has given me no orders to withdraw. We are staying". Capt Ismail saw the action, contacted Bashir and ordered him to withdraw. On the way back the tank was fired upon by friendly troops, fortunately with small arms. When the party was recognised there was overwhelming hospitality. Bashir, his tank crew and his observer party were never conscious of their separate arms. Theirs was a sample of the spirit in which 1 (SP) and tank units worked together. It was also a major factor in the success of 6 Armoured Division operations.

Capt Bashir was commended by the Commander-in-Chief for his devotion to duty.

The attacks against Chawinda-Badiana were repeated on 15 and 16 September. They were met with concentrated fire of 4 Corps Artillery and some guns of 15 Division Artillery. On 11 September 4 Armoured Brigade, 15 (SP) and 16 (SP) were deployed near Khem-Karan on road Kasur-Amritsar. At 0900 hours 12 September they received warning order to move to Sialkot. As soon as the reconnaissance parties had prepared positions for reception of guns the orders were changed. After two cancellations the regiments deployed on Daska-Pasrur road. On 16 September they were ordered to reinforce 4 Corps Artillery in the battle of Chawinda.

On 16 September there were three attacks on Badiana and Chawinda. 4 Horse and 17 Horse tangled with Guides Cavalry. In spite of heavy casualties the enemy kept on repeating attacks. Our infantry positions in Jassoran and Buttar Dograndi were over-run, hardly a mile from 1 (SP) and 4 Corps Artillery gun positions. Gen Rana rang up Amjad and asked if he intended to withdraw the guns. Amjad had no doubt in his mind. "Negative. We fight here". Orders were passed to all units to get ready to fight over open sights. Nevertheless Gen Rana despatched two companies of 6 Frontier Force for defence of guns. At this point Maj Rashid ordered tank alert and established his observation post on

some high ground over-looking the contested area. Rashid then liaised with commanding officer 25 Cavalry and the two officers worked out a quick counter-attack to restore the situation. The attack achieved its purpose and the Indians were diverted from gun positions of 4 Corps Artillery. During the night some guns were redeployed in the rear. The fighting continued after dark and our observers, using star shells, harried the enemy tanks on their way back.

The Indian commander of 17 Horse Lt Col Tarapur was killed in this action. He was a gallant soldier and had led the attack with great skill and determination.

4 Corps Artillery did a magnificent job. Brig Amjad Chowdhri was recognised with Hilal-i-Jurat and Dilawar Butt with Sitara-i-Jurat. Wireless operator Faiz Ahmad 123 Battery continued to serve his observer in spite of his wounds and received the Commander-in-Chief's commendation card. The awards were only a token, and by no means the sum total of artillery performance in battle.

The battle for Butter Dograndi and Chawinda ebbed and flowed from 14 to 20 September.

The Indians had committed three infantry and one armoured division in the attack on 6 September. Apart from the four division artillery brigades they had two corps/army artillery brigades against a hundred odd guns of 4 Corps Artillery. The Indians enjoyed considerable quantitative

superiority in respect of infantry, armour and air. Starting on 6 September they had advanced ten miles in eleven days. Opposed to them was 6 Armoured Division, 24 Brigade and 4 Corps Artillery defending a frontage of 20,000 yards. 6 Armoured Division was nothing more than an armoured brigade group. Its artillery support consisted of I (SP) Regiment which became part of 4 Corps Artillery during this battle.

The terrain offered no serious obstacles to the attacking Indian troops. In fact, on balance, the terrain favoured attack rather than defence.

With the above mentioned superiority in numbers the enemy should have broken through to Marala-Ravi Link and beyond. For the Indians Chawinda was the sesame to Marala-Ravi Link, the unhinging of Sialkot defences and the envelopment of Lahore. Hence their determined, costly attacks to break through at Chawinda. Indian failure may be attributed to their failure to use artillery, armour and air to blast through the depth of the defensive system. Our success in defence was due to the skill with which fire power was controlled and applied; and to the heart warming manner in which armour, infantry and artillery units worked together. Finally our troops in Sialkot, as elsewhere, were fighting for the survival of the land of our dreams. We had nowhere else to go to.

On 18 September Butter Dograndi was captured by

3 Frontier Force after having changed hands twice. The same evening Jassoran was secured and 20 Baluch captured Fatehpur. Thereafter the battle settled down to artillery duels where we had the edge with our heavy guns, superior locating devices and superior control and application of fire. The Indians enjoyed, perhaps, three to one superiority in number of guns available.¹ Our ability to survive is attributable to a better combination of guns and locating devices. We did more than merely survive. We inflicted severe punishment. After the war Gen Musa and Field Marshal Ayub complimented 4 Corps Artillery :—

Gen Musa's remarks

"I am proud of the part played by our artillery in the crucial battle in Sialkot. Indeed the whole corps proved its worth in dealing with the Indian naked aggression and the whole army is indebted to it. The superb performance of our artillery is admitted even by the enemy, which in a way, is very reliable evidence".

Field Marshal Ayub's remarks

"By all accounts the part played by 4 Corps Artillery can only be termed as magnificent. The results they achieved are miraculous for which they deserve congratulations and gratitude of us all".

Lahore (Map No. 2)

Indian 11 Corps was given the mission of capturing Lahore and Kasur. This was confirmed from several Indian documents, and PWs. captured during the war. The operation order for attack had been issued as early as 16 August. Move of troops into forward concentration areas was carried out during the next fortnight. Simultaneously Indian officers disguised as civilians carried out reconnaissance of their areas of operation.

11 Corps consisted of 4 Mountain Division, 7 Division, 15 Division and an armoured Brigade, 15 Division was to attack Lahore along Wagah road and 7 Division was to attack along Burki road. 4 Mountain Division was to capture Kasur. The armoured brigade was split up, a regiment operating with each division. Artillery support consisted of divisional artillery on each axis reinforced by corps and army artillery brigades.

Opposing Indian offensive we had 10 Division in Lahore and 11 Division in Kasur. There was no corps headquarters to control and co-ordinate operations of these two divisions, with consequent loss in combat effectiveness. Three battalions do not make a brigade; much less do three divisions make a corps.

10 Division was responsible for defence of Lahore, from Ravi in the north to Bedian in the south, a front of approximately 60,000 yards. It was commanded by Maj Gen Sarfraz an Olympic athlete, and a graduate of Government

College Lahore with a Master's degree in history, an Awan with the stamina of his tribe. The division had six infantry battalions, one R & S (reconnaissance and support) battalion, 23 Cavalry and 30 TDU (Tank Delivery Unit). 23 Cavalry had one squadron of M47 tanks. The remainder of 23 Cavalry and entire 30 TDU were equipped with asthmatic World War II Shermans. 10 Division Artillery consisted of following units:—

22 Field Regiment	Direct support 22 Brigade
23 Field Regiment	Direct support 114 Brigade
24 Field Regiment	Direct support 103 Brigade
9 Medium Regiment	
91 Mortar Battery	
30 Heavy Regiment	Transferred (eight 155 millimetre guns and four 8 inch howitzers)
122 Division Locating Battery	
137 Battery 37 Corps Artillery Locating Regiment	Transferred from 1 Corps

10 Division Artillery was commanded by Brig J. A. Aziz, an officer with sound military education.

114 Brigade was responsible for defence of Ravi syphon through Bhaini bridge and inclusive main Wagah road, a front of approximately 30,000 yards. It had 3 Baluch, 11 Baluch, 16 Punjab less two companies and squadron 30 TDU. The formation was commanded by Brig Aftab Ahmad, short, intense, forthright, a graduate from Government College Lahore.

103 Brigade was responsible for defence of exclusive Wagah road to Bedian the boundary between 10 and 11 Division. The brigade had 12 Punjab, 17 Punjab and squadron 30 TDU. It was commanded by Brig Asghar, a hearty Punjabi.

22 Brigade, consisting of 15 Baluch, 18 Baluch, Alfa company 11 Frontier Force and 23 Cavalry, was the division Striking Force. In the semantic indulgence called 'New Tactical Concept' the division counter attack force had been given this ambitious appellation. 22 Brigade was commanded by Brig Qayyum Sher, a tall, loose limbed Pathan with the natural grace of a country squire. 22 Field Regiment was raised by Lt Col Sheikh Mohammad Aslam. The batteries were contributed as follows:—

- 63 Battery from 3 (SP) Field Regiment
- 64 Battery from 11 Field Regiment
- 65 Battery from 8 Medium Regiment

Aslam got the regiment on its feet in quick time. In 1965 it was commanded by Lt Col KhanZaman. The second-in-command was Maj Shams-ud-Dhoha Khan an East Pakistani officer; laughing eyes, dedicated, energised by a built-in dynamo. On 26 August 22 Field was affiliated to 11 Division. Reconnaissance of gun position in Kasur had been carried out. But fortunately for 10 Division the orders for move of the regiment to Kasur got lost in the debates in General Headquarters.

23 Field Regiment was raised by Lt Col Shirin Dil

Khan Niazi at Lahore in January 1955. In March 1959 the unit was on exercise in area north of Peshawar. The commanding officer Lt Col Shah Mohammad was carrying out air reconnaissance when his L19 crashed, fortunately within sight of his regiment. Capt Asaf Jah Shad rushed to the scene and rescued Lt Col Shah Mohammad and the pilot from the burning plane. Capt Shad was awarded Sitara-i-Basalat for his gallantry. In 1965 the regiment was commanded by Lt Col Malik Imdad Ali, an unassuming but dependable gunner.

24 Field Regiment was raised in January 1955 at Nowshera Thana Camp. The first commanding officer was Lt Col Akhtar Ahmad Khan. In 1965 the regiment was commanded by Lt Col Mohammad Nawaz Sial, a handsome Punjabi jat. Sial had been in command since 1960.

9 Medium was converted from anti-tank to medium in September 1956. Before taking on 155 millimetre howitzers the regiment had been handling 6 pounders, 17 pounders, 3.7 inch howitzers and 25 pounders. In October 1957 the regiment calibrated its guns. Brig Wasi-ud-Din, commander artillery 1 Armoured Division, fired the first round. In 1961 Lt Col Gulzar assumed command and remained with the regiment for the next seven years. Gulzar had over twenty years service by 1965, and not a day removed from guns. In May 1965, 9 Medium was affiliated to 52 Brigade in Kasur. Its place in 10 Division was taken up by 28 Medium which left for Kharian in July. 9 Medium returned to Lahore by third week of August.

30 Heavy Regiment was raised at Lahore in June 1957 by Lt Col Maqbool Hussain. 'Mac' was a Lahori; intelligent, full of laughter and generous. He was six feet tall and weighed over two hundred pounds. But he moved with the speed of a fighting bull. His size and his character matched the 155 millimetre guns. In 1965 Lt Col Mohammad Sibghatullah Fazli was in command of the regiment. Fazli was short and well proportioned. He treated his command generously. He was also intelligent and extremely methodical. He left his hall-mark whatever he commanded, from Anti-Aircraft School to 30 Heavy Regiment.

91 Mortar Battery was raised in January 1957 by Maj Khawaja Mohammad Ismail; tall, thin, sharp almost a stiletto. In 1965 the battery was commanded by Maj Jehan Khan Bajwa.

The terrain on either side of border in this area is suitable for penetration by armour. But towards this purpose the attack has to be worked out in minute detail, catering for quick crossing of obstacles. Also the initial attack must be delivered on a narrow front providing for concentration of air, artillery and armour. Neither the Indians nor ourselves pursued attack with any such devotion. A purely defensive attitude is uneconomical and vulnerable. This is particularly so in respect of Pakistan where enemy medium artillery while

deployed inside Indian territory can engage targets as deep as Shahdara.

On night 4/5 September GOC 10 Division ordered partial occupation of forward defences. In 114 Brigade a company each from 3 Baluch, 11 Frontier Force, R & S and 67 Battery 23 Field Regiment was deployed.

Brig Aftab, commander 114 Brigade, gave out orders at 1330 hours 5 September in an orchard short of Batapur. The brigade was to move during the night. No move before last light. Nevertheless parties for preparing gun positions were despatched by 1700 hours. The gun positions which had been prepared earlier had been filled up when troops returned to lines in July. The position was occupied at 0000 hours 6 September.

23 Field Regiment had to provide fire support on a front of 30,000 yards, enforcing dispersed deployment. The batteries had to be deployed approximately six thousand yards apart militating against concentration of fire, creating difficulties of command and control. But it had one virtue. In the opening hours of battle it gave impression of well organised defence; it baffled the enemy since he had planned to catch us in our beds.

Lt Abdul Malik (23 Field) established his observation post with company 11 Frontier Force. The company was

commanded by Maj Arif Jan. Company headquarter and observation post were located in village Dial, three miles ahead of Batapur shoe factory.

At 1900 hours 5 September Lt Malik, Lt Ikram (91 Mortar Battery) and Lt Jaffar Shah (30 TDU) sat down to dinner. There was the usual betting about likelihood of war. At 2300 hours the officers dispersed. At 0230 hours Malik woke up to the sound of small arms fire, which was rather more than the normal flushing of smugglers by Rangers. Malik got into his jeep and drove towards the border. About 600 yards ahead of the observation post he sensed some movement. Malik mistook it for own troops. However he stopped the jeep. The moving figures approached and the shape of their helmets alerted Malik. Hastily he pulled on his pistol and shouting a curse, fired. Some one shouted back, "Do not commit suicide". A rifle burst shattered the wind screen, a splinter cutting through Malik's left cheek. He was pulled out of the jeep. An Indian Lt Col said:—

"When did you come here" ?

"Last night".

"You are lying. I was informed that none of your men are in position".

"Go ahead. You will find out".

The colonel halted the advance. At 0600 hours Indian tanks came up and started shooting. Some time later own Sabre jets strafed Indian troops. At 1100 hours Malik was blindfolded and removed towards the rear.

Indian troops had infiltrated behind our reconnaissance and support company, and cut the line to Lt Abdul Malik's observation post. A communication party went forward to investigate and was ambushed. Another party was sent out and two more men were lost.

The leading brigade of 15 Indian Division reached Dograi at about the same time as a company of our 3 Baluch occupied position on home bank of BRB, ahead of Batapur. It was as if the moves of opposing forces were being controlled by a directing staff in peace time manoeuvres. The company 3 Baluch was commanded by Maj Anwar Shah, an energetic and resourceful leader. Anwar deployed his weapons well dispersed and ordered his men to continue firing from position to position. Fate brought Maj Jehan Khan Bajwa on the scene. Jehan Bajwa was looking for a likely role for his 120 millimetre mortars. Anwar asked Bajwa, "What about getting some guns on the Indians" ?

"Surely"

Bajwa got on to 23 Field and the Indians were as astonished about the turn of events as was our side. Three Indian tanks had crossed over to east side of BRB. These were destroyed with recoil-less rifles. At 0400 hours Capt Khushi Mohammad, observer with 11 Baluch at Bahini bridge,

requested permission to engage Indian troops. These had crossed the international border and were advancing on village Ichogil Uttar, two thousand yards inside Pakistan, about fifteen hundred yards from Khushi's observation post. Khushi was a reservist officer, a former mountain gunner recalled after several years in retirement. But he was made of cowhide which grew tougher with age.

The guns were not to open fire without specific permission from commander 114 Brigade. The battery commander 67 Battery, Maj Saadat Chowdhri younger brother of Brig Amjad Chowdhri, quickly worked out the time and space reality. He requested permission from second-in-command Maj Rizvi and within two minutes Pakistani shells shrieked over-head to greet the Indians; who were not expecting such prompt unfriendliness. They limped back, returned after two hours and went back sorrier than before. At 1100 hours they made the last attempt of the day. The Indians then tried to knock out Khushi's observation post with machine guns, tanks and recoil-less rifles. But Khushi survived. He was recognised with award of Sitara-i-Jurat.

On night 5/6 September digging parties of 9 Medium were preparing gun positions short of Batapur. At 0320 hours Lt Ahmad Masood, gun position officer 27 Battery, walked into Capt Ikram ul Haq's office. Ikram was the adjutant and was rather annoyed at the intrusion. Masood said, "Sir, Indians are crawling all over the other side of Batapur". Ikram

immediately ordered the regiment to occupy gun positions. The Indians never expected to be hit by mediums at this early stage of the development. They thought they had run into some kind of trap. They had been going through the convolutions of advance to contact, a rather misplaced application.

At about 0930 hours 6 September while the artillery duel was in progress a jeep came to a screeching halt in front of the regimental command post and Maj Waterfield stepped out wearing PMA beret. Waterfield was adjutant PMA. In June he was struck down with typhoid and was convalescing in Lahore when he heard the sound of guns on morning 6 September. He commandeered a jeep and rushed to 9 Medium command post, still wearing PMA beret. Lt Col Gulzar looked at a pale emaciated Waterfield and told him to go back and rest. Waterfield pleaded, "My country has been fattening me for the last fifteen years for this very day and now you tell me to go back" 7 He was despatched to 24 Field as observer in village Barki.

In the afternoon a battery commander called for a regimental concentration of five rounds gun fire. He gave no description. Finally the adjutant threw up, "You have fired two hundred and seventy rounds. Unless you give description of target there will be no more rounds". The battery commander responded,

"Unable to give description. I am in battalion headquarters and relaying orders from observer out in front. What do you think we are playing at" ? In the opening stages of battle it was creditable that both officers kept their heads.

69 Battery 24 Field Regiment came into action short of village Barki at 0330 hours 5 September. The remainder of 24 Field moved into action at 0230 hours 6 September in area Jalalabad, four thousand yards short of Barki. 69 Battery had been deployed forward in order to delay enemy and give early warning.

At 0545 hours 6 September N/Sub Ghulam Rabbani, observer in Barki, saw four enemy tanks approaching, village Hudiara. Rabbani engaged them with his own guns. The Indian tanks swerved over towards west of Hudiara.

At 0900 hours Lt Col Sial ordered 69 Battery to rejoin the regiment in Jalalabad. Five guns moved out. The tractor of sixth gun picked up this critical moment to go sour. The gun was left in charge of N/Sub Mohammad Aslam, assistant gun position officer. The officer immediately organised the gun position for local defence. A tank hunting party was set up under Nk Gulistan and remainder of the team were instructed that in case of enemy attack they were to fire as fast as they could load with different types of ammunition. Some half an hour later a tank took up hull down position and started peppering the gun position. The tank hunting party

went into action simultaneously with fire from the gun. The tank was knocked out and the gun brought out by Capt Qazi the quartermaster.

By 0900 hours enemy tanks, and approximately a battalion of infantry had advanced two thousand yards ahead of village Hudiara to village Nurpur. Capt Shams observer at Barka Kalan, engaged them with held and medium guns. The attackers suffered heavy casualties and refrained from further advance. Maj Abdul Qadir, from his Barki observation post, also spotted the Indians in Hudiara and being authorised observer brought in field, medium and heavy shells on the target. Enemy advance stalled in Hudiara and Nurpur for approximately nine hours. The time purchased enabled 103 Brigade to organise defensive position on BRB.

Shams became the villain for enemy tanks and his observation post was showered with every kind of missile. Shams stayed on even after other troops had withdrawn west of BRB. Thereafter the Indians always worried about our left-behind observers. Lt Col Sial ordered Shams to rejoin regiment at 1430 hours.

The fighting between Hudiara and Nurpur had been quite severe and ammunition expenditure correspondingly heavy. Col Sial anticipating crisis in ammunition supply ordered Capt Qazi and Sub Maj Ali Akbar to ensure that the guns never ran short.

During the period 1960 to 1965, under the ill-defined guise of 'streamlining', logistic transport had been cut down with half-witted abandon, without appreciation of our operational requirements. Furthermore, the scales of first and second line ammunition had been reduced to half. On the other hand the scales of small arms ammunition had been almost doubled. This was a by-product of the 'New Tactical Concept' where rifles and machine guns were evaluated with higher combat effectiveness than artillery. Under the circumstances crises in ammunition supply of artillery were a common occurrence during 1965 war.

Sub Maj Ali Akbar was at rear headquarters in Lahore when he got the message. He had only one jeep with which to organise ammunition supply. He drove straight to the cantonment bridge and stopped every bus or truck coming his way. The Lahories responded as only the Lahories do in a time of national emergency. There was no dearth of volunteers to carry the ammunition to gun positions. In fact the entire division artillery was served by willing volunteers, with tears of pride straining from their eyes, and without the least consciousness of danger; some of them in expensively tailored suits, and many more in dhoties and shalwars. They unloaded the ammunition near gun positions, sometimes under shelling. And these were men who had perhaps never seen or heard artillery shelling. They asked for no reward, no thanks, no recognition. They considered themselves lucky in being afforded the opportunity to help defend Pakistan.

Appreciating the gravity of Indian threat to the bridge at Batapur Gen Sarfraz reinforced company 3 Baluch with Charlie squadron 23 Cavalry, Alpha company 18 Baluch and Alpha company 11 Frontier Force.

Charlie squadron was commanded by Maj Amin Moghal and Alpha company 18 Baluch by Maj Jilani. Moghal had Capt Sultan Hussain Shah for artillery observer and Jilani was accompanied by N/Sub Nawab Khan.

As the force reached Batapur they ran into artillery and tank fire. Charlie squadron lost three tanks including the squadron commander's. Fortunately by this time the fire of 30 Heavy Regiment (155 millimetre guns) became available. Sultan called division artillery concentration and of course he had the priority of call for medium and heavy guns. Nawab had to be content with field guns. The enemy was driven back across the bridge with a-combination of fire from artillery, tanks and recoil-less rifles. By 1300 hours several enemy attempts to capture the bridge had been thwarted by a handful of infantry, a squadron of tanks and three artillery observers. At one time during exchange of artillery fire a shell splinter ignited cordite in number 3 gun pit of 64 Battery. L/Nk Mohammad Aslam, who was working in command post, saw the smoke coming out of the gun pit. Oblivious of personal danger he smothered the fire with handfuls of dirt. Aslam was awarded Imtiazi Sanad.

At 1115 hours the adjutant, Capt Karim, received report that Sultan was missing. Neither 3 Baluch nor 18 Baluch had any knowledge of his whereabouts. At 1600 hours Sultan arrived at 63 Battery command post. The observer vehicle had been destroyed by machine gun fire. Technical assistant Ghulam Rasul was badly wounded. Signaller Bashir and Capt Sultan had a miraculous escape. By 1700 hours the observer was back with his supported squadron.

In the evening Maj Sarwat Mahmood's driver was carried into CMH by some civilians. There was no news of the

major or his jeep. Another jeep identified as belonging to N/Sub Nawab was brought to 64 Battery position. Again there was no news of the observer. Every one was depressed. Sarwat, an inflammable but large hearted Punjabi, was a darling of his battery. Some time later both the officers contacted the adjutant on wireless. The relief was like a shower of rain after days of suffocating humidity.

While the ground battle was raging, our Sabre jets roared overhead and pounced on Indian columns. The troops on ground momentarily forgot their own worries and waved at the planes. As Indian pressure built up Gen Sarfraz ordered the bridge at Batapur demolished. The engineers worked at the charges under enemy fire. Maj Zafar Alam, 9 Medium, was detailed to cover the demolition with artillery fire. While the engineers were working, Alam's jeep was hit and the wireless set went out of action. Capt Ikram, adjutant, sent his own jeep and the covering fire was resumed. The charges were fired at 0100 hours 7 September.

During the night 6/7 September 22 Field was repositioned in Lakhodher and was ready to fire by first light.

At this stage of battle 15 Baluch (less two companies) was placed under command 114 Brigade and took up defensive position in area north Syphon. Maj Mohammad Khan went along with 15 Baluch and got on to 23 Field communication net, whereas Maj Taslim Beg Chughtai, 23 Field, tied in with 22 Field Regiment. The regrouping necessitated by fighting on 6 September reduced 22 Brigade (Striking Force) to the following units :—

23 Cavalry (less squadron)

18 Baluch (less two companies)

15 Frontier Force (less two companies)
22 Field Regiment in direct support.

At 1300 hours 7 September 22 Brigade was ordered to concentrate near village Awan Dhahiwal; its mission, to strike enemy flank east of BRB canal. This was a change from peace-time planning and was necessitated by the change in enemy situation.

The Indian pressure against Barki forced the detachment of our troops across the canal. Capt Anwar, 24 Field, hung on and kept the enemy at bay with well directed artillery fire. Next morning the village was reoccupied by our troops. The company commander, Maj Aziz Bhatti, made it a point to commend Anwar for devotion to duty. But that is where the commendation ended.

At 0400 hours 8 September 22 Brigade was ordered to attack across BRB and clear enemy on eastern bank of the canal from Bhaini bridge to village Dograi opposite Batapur. The force had to cross Syphon five thousand yards north of Bhaini bridge. 22 Field, direct support regiment of 22 Brigade, was deployed in Lakhodher from where it was out of range to support operation of the striking force. The deficiency was pointed out to headquarters artillery by Lt Col Gulzar, commanding officer 9 Medium Regiment. Nevertheless 22 Field remained in Lakhodher during the morning and was ordered to move forward to village Taejgarh after 22 Brigade had cleared Bhaini bridge. The Indians had shown considerable interest in the area between Bhaini and Ravi and Brig Aziz appreciated that 22 Field was needed in Lakhodher to deal with the contingency of Indian

threat developing from this direction. Meanwhile 22 Brigade was supported by 23 Field, 9 Medium and 30 Heavy Regiments.

22 Brigade attack was led by Alpha squadron 23 Cavalry and Delta company 18 Baluch. Capt Farooq, (9 Medium), accompanied Alpha squadron as observer and Capt Lai Mohammad (22 Field) went with Delta company 18 Baluch. Maj Sarwat Mahmood kept company with commanding officer 23 Cavalry. On his way to join Alpha squadron Farooq was given a pleasant task by the adjutant 9 Medium : to pin on RHM Safdar the badges of rank of naib subedar. The RHM was manning an observation post on a tree in 18 Baluch position. Farooq called on Safdar to step down. As the two officers walked away from the tree the observation post disintegrated under the ' impact of a shell. The new badges of rank carried a lot of good will.

As Alpha squadron and Delta company reached village Talwara War, fifteen hundred yards west of Bhaini, they were caught by artillery fire. The troops faltered. At this point Brig Qayyum Sher drove his jeep ahead of the tanks, star plate and pennant visible to every one. This was old fashioned leadership; it was also something which no troops worth their salt could ignore.

Anticipating trouble on exit from Syphon, Maj Nazar Hussain, the squadron commander, made fire base with one troop on home side of Bhaini bridge while Risaldar Ghulam Ali's troop came down from Syphon along far side and attacked Bhaini from north. The approach afforded movement of tanks in single file along the north bank of

canal. Five hundred yards short of Bhaini two tanks were hit including Risaldar Ghulam Ali's. While helping a member of the crew Ghulam Ali was hit by machine-gun fire, he fell into the canal and his body was carried away.

The tank troop on home bank immediately peppered the source of trouble. Meanwhile Maj Sarwat Mahmood, who almost instinctively homed on to a good shoot, searched the area with divisional artillery concentrations. Thereafter the resistance was ironed out and by 1300 hours our leading troops were two thousand yards short of Wagah road. One thousand yards north of village Mana, Alpha squadron came upon a two star jeep abandoned near Pulkanjri distri-butory. The jeep belonged to GOC 15 Indian Division Maj Gen Narayan Parshad.

Two thousand yards short of Wagah Bravo squadron came under fire from village Dograi and Lakanke. Capt Lai Mohammad and Maj Sarwat Mahmood made a quick fire plan. It consisted of calling for a series of uniform targets as the supported troops advanced. One troop Charlie squadron reached village Mana and bagged five prisoners. By 1320 hours forward elements of 22 Brigade had cut the road at mile 13 about five hundred yards east of Dograi. In the process two enemy tanks were knocked out and two runners captured.

During night 8/9 September regrouping of units was carried out between 22 and 114 Brigade. By morning 9 September 22 Brigade consisted of following units:-

23 Cavalry

16 Punjab (less two companies)

18 Baluch (less one company)

8 Punjab one company

15 Frontier Force (R & S) two companies

22 Field in direct support

After the attack 22 Brigade was deployed as follows:-

16 Punjab (less two companies) Dograi area under command Delta company 18 Baluch.

18 Baluch (less two companies) Basin area under command company 8 Punjab Company 15 Frontier Force (R & S)

22 Brigade tactical headquarters was established with 18 Baluch. The deployment of 22 Brigade in defensive role was unavoidable but it deprived 10 Division of reserves for dealing with contingencies. This deficiency caused some uncomfortable moments during the ensuing week.

During night 9/10 September 16 Punjab was ordered to capture village Dial. The attack started at 0600 hours 10 September and was led by Alpha squadron 23 Cavalry. A patrol of 16 Punjab had previously reported that Dial was clear of enemy. Perhaps based on this source no provision was made for preparatory bombardment. The attack progressed as far as village Jhuggian, and then ran into organised resistance. 23 Cavalry claimed a kill of nine enemy tanks and some recoil-less rifles in exchange for four of their own tanks. 16 Punjab mounted a company on tanks to go beyond Jhuggian. The company commander Maj

Mobarak Ali was killed when the company ran into artillery fire. Just short of Dial the attack was called off.

In 103 Brigade area Indian attack against Barka Kalan on Barki road developed at 1500 hours 8 September. Our observers in Barki had a field day. The attack stalled and was resumed only after last night. Throughout the night 8 September our guns kept punishing Indian positions. The Indian gun positions were never secure from our counter-bombardment, thanks to the excellence of our locating units.

At 1800 hours 9 September Lt Col Sial and Sub Maj Ali Akbar visited gun positions. They were caught in enemy counter-bombardment, a prelude to Indian attack. Sial decided to visit Capt Anwar's observation post in Barki. Anwar was bleary eyed from almost ninety hours of action. Sial said, "Anwar you need some rest". Anwar started to protest. Sial said, "You will be taken out under escort". Anwar went and was replaced by Sub Sher Dil.

At 2000 hours the Indians attacked Barki with infantry and tanks supported by more than a divisional artillery. Sub Sher Dil responded with field, mediums and 8 inch howitzers. An Indian tank was hit by a 200 pound shell and blew up. At 2100 hours the Indians got into east end of Barki. Three Indian soldiers closed on Maj Bhatti and Sub Sher Dil. The subedar snatched an enemy sten gun and shot all three. Sher Dil lost a finger. Thereafter the two officers withdrew across BRB.

Lt Col Sial was at regimental command post listening to Sub Sher Dil's calls for fire. Suddenly the fire orders were interrupted by stutter of sten gun, and then communication to observation post went dead. Sial visualised the mishap and immediately started engaging the area of observation post with division artillery concentrations, or as much of it as was available. Sub Sher Dil was evacuated to hospital with multiple wounds. He was replaced by Capt Anwar who was glad to be again with Aziz Bhatti. As soon as Anwar settled down in the observation post Bhatti indicated three Indian tanks crawling towards BRB. Anwar responded and a tank blew up. The other two took up hull down positions. Bhatti stood up to see the effect of the shoot. The Indians had their eye on the place. As soon as Bhatti stood up a tank shell tore into him.

Maj Aziz Bhatti was a sword of honour graduate from Pakistan Military Academy, as well as winner of Quaid-e-Azam gold medal awarded for excellence in academics. He had pale blue eloquent eyes, a radiant smile and a surprisingly serene voice. Maj Aziz Bhatti was awarded the well deserved Nishan-i-Haider. Capt Anwar got a pat on the back.

After the fall of Barki the troops on south Syphon withdrew towards home bank of BRB. Brig Jamil Akhtar Aziz, permitted the commanding officer 24 Field to use own discretion in repositioning the regiment towards the rear. Lt Col Sial appreciated that a rear-ward move at that stage would amount to a gratuitous award of time and space to the enemy. He decided to stay in position.

At 2200 hours 12 September while situation around Barki was far from clear some one reported that Indian tanks had crossed south Syphon and were heading towards Lahore cantonment. A little checking would have pricked the rumour. The bridge over south Syphon was too narrow to allow passage of tanks. Nevertheless the rumour had some basis. Our 4 Armoured Brigade was moving from Kasur to Sialkot. Some of the tanks were diverted towards Wagah, but no one had informed the natives.

At 2300 hours Lt Ahmad Masood, gun position officer 27 Battery (9 Medium), reported to Capt Ikram that Indian tanks were advancing towards the gun position. Ikram saw a vehicle with full lights heading toward 9 Medium command post. The officers collected some men to ambush the vehicle. It turned out to be a jeep bearing a star and flag of a brigade commander. Ikram rushed and pointing his sten gun shouted 'Hands up'. A tall dust covered brigadier gingerly stepped out of the vehicle and in a tired voice asked the identity of the local unit. Ikram requested the brigadier to proceed to command post. When the party entered the dug out the second-in-command Maj Moin (Chin) jumped up and saluted. The brigadier returned the salute and said, "How are you Moin"? The captured brigadier turned out to be Qayyum Sher commander 22 Brigade.

That same night an Indian battalion with some tanks was seen concentrating in Ichogil Hithar, presumably for attack on Bhaini bridge. Capt Khushi called for divisional artillery concentration,⁴ "Five rounds gun fire. Fire by order". The Indian concentration disintegrated under the impact of shells.

Village Dograi is located close to the east bank of BRB opposite Batapur. The village is the usual helter skelter of

single storey mud houses, double storey brick structures, loose dirt lanes, uncertain ragged drains sullenly suppurating corruption, a mosque, a stagnant pond choked with green scum, several mounds of putrid rotting excrement, and a scattering of incongruous sheesham trees. But notwithstanding its inverted aesthetics the situation of Dograi is of tactical importance to defence or advance on either side of BRB. For this reason the Indians made several attempts to capture the village. The final attempt was made on night 21/22 September. Indians started preparatory bombardment with about a hundred guns. The brunt of the attack was borne by Bravo company commanded by Capt Saghir Hussain. The company lost some weapons during the preparatory bombardment. But it held on. The grit was supplied by Saghir and artillery support by Chughtai.

At 0630 hours the Indians launched a third attack supported by tanks. Some enemy troops managed to capture left edge of Dograi and Bravo company was ordered to withdraw to home bank of BRB. Saghir with about twenty men covered the rear-ward move of the remainder company. He was wounded when the enemy commander Maj Sindhu called on him to surrender. He charged the enemy along with his remaining four men, and fell with a bullet in his forehead. Saghir was a handsome officer in every shade of meaning. Along with his military education he had acquired a Master's degree in history during his eight year's service. He had stars in his eyes. The battalion suffered fifty five killed, thirty nine wounded. Lt Col Golwala and Maj Chughtai were among the captured.

The strength of Lahories was epitomised in a song by Raees Amrohi.

خطہ لاہور تیرے جانشادوں کو سلام

(Salute to the immortals of Lahore)

The Governor of West Pakistan Malik Amir Mohammad Khan remained in Lahore, refusing antiaircraft protection, driving through the streets without escort, symbolising the determination of our people. After the cease-fire college boys and girls, middle aged professionals, bent and wrinkled veterans visited the forward troops to see with their own eyes the soldiers who stood between them and humiliation. They came on foot, on every type of conveyance, carrying garlands, loaded with sweets and with tears of joy and pride in their eyes. For eighteen years we had lived in cantonments, strangers to civilian themes, taking a certain pride in our aloofness. In the war of 1965 our professionalism was reinforced by the response of our people.

We were no longer strangers.

Kasur (Map No. 2)

General Headquarters issued orders for raising 11 Division on 28 May 1965. Maj Gen Abdul Hamid Khan, Director General Military Training was appointed to command the formation. The appointment of Director General Military Training was declared redundant to the prosecution of war. On 2 June Gen Hamid and Maj Iqbal Mehdi Shah GSO-2 (intelligence) established division headquarters in Kasur. Col Ghulam Umar, colonel staff, joined immediately afterwards along with the remaining

staff. At this time 11 Division consisted of the following:—

21 Brigade
 5 Frontier Force
 13 Baluch

62 Brigade
 7 Punjab
 12 Baluch
106 Brigade
 1 East Bengal
 7 Baluch
 6 Lancers

11 Division Artillery

38 Field Regiment	- ex 8 Division Artillery
Battery 12 Medium Regiment	- ex 8 Division Artillery
9 Medium Regiment	- ex 10 Division Artillery reverted to 10 Division in July.
35 Heavy Regiment - (12x8 inch howitzers and 4x 155 millimetre guns)	ex 1 Corps Artillery
37 Corps Locating - Regiment less battery	ex 1 Corps Artillery

Col Shirin Dil Khan Niazi, commandant- Artillery School Nowshera, was posted as commander artillery. All schools of

instruction were closed down for the duration of war. This was one of the expedients with which we convinced ourselves that the war would be a short, sharp affair, according to our definition of time, space and intensity.

Maj Naqi was appointed as brigade major. Naqi had all the qualifications required of a successful professional soldier; knowledge, foresight, endurance and tremendous drive. But in the pursuit of his missidfl⁴ he seldom bothered to adjust his stride according to the convenience of slower minds, irrespective of rank. And some slow minds never forgave Naqi. He retired in 1970 in the rank of lieutenant colonel.

11 Division front extended from Bedian in the north to excluding Sulemanki in south-west. It measured 100,000 yards with a straight edge on map ; not considering the quivering configuration of defensive features or the international border. 11 Division was deployed as follows:-

106 Brigade with direct support	- From Bedian excluding Burj to including
35 Heavy less battery	Nathawala syphon and
Battery 9 Medium	BRB canal

Troop	88	Mortar
Battery		

52 Brigade with direct support	- From including road Kasur-Khem Karn to including Gandasingh Wala road Lahore-
9 Medium less battery	
Battery 38 Field	

Ferozepur.

21	Brigade with under command 15 Lancers Direct support	-	Division counter attack force.
	38 Field less battery Battery 12 Medium		

113 Heavy Battery (155 millimetre guns) originally from 30 Heavy was deployed to cover the front of both forward brigades.

The above deployment entailed a front of approximately 70,000 yards to be defended by four battalions. But even with this over-stretched deployment the area between Gandasingh Wala and Sulemanki had to be left to the tender care of Sutlej Rangers. The terrain here was by no means impervious to hostile attack. But commitment of 21 Brigade would have deprived 11 Division of any capability to face the contingencies of battle. The Sutlej Rangers could maintain nothing more than widely separated lookout posts. The risk taken by Gen Hamid was justified in the battles of Khem Karn. From Bedian to Gandasingh Wala the terrain most suitable for attack by either side was the approach through Khem Karn.

Since 11 Division and its artillery had been raised on the spur of an unforeseen emergency they had to be content with whatever could be spared from Chamb, Sialkot and Lahore.

The result was a mixing of calibres within units and employment of medium and heavy units in direct support role.

A total of eleven observation posts were established with the forward troops. This worked out to surveillance of six thousand yards per observer in an area where field of observation was generally limited to three thousand yards. But the units had been trimmed to the bone in officer establishment and communication equipment, neither of which could be obtained out of the local sheesham trees.

The commander artillery in order to ensure repositioning of guns in quick time ordered extensive survey of the area. A total of 113 bearing pickets were established by 37 Locating Regiment. Thereafter the repositioning of guns had little difficulty in respect of theatre grid. The accuracy of artillery fire, and economy in ammunition expenditure, was due to the facilities provided by 37 Locating Regiment. This unit was raised at Campbellpur in February 1960 by Maj Mohammad Ashraf. Two months later Lt Col Khalil Ahmad Khan assumed command. Khalil had extensive experience of command, staff and as instructor gunnery. He was a generous commanding officer and was loved by his men. The subedar major, Kala Khan, was an old surveyor with active service experience in Frontier operations, Burma during World War II and in Kashmir 1947/48. Kala Khan was an exacting task master and an affectionate subedar major.

35 Heavy Regiment (8 inch howitzers) was raised at Malirin February 1958 by Lt Col Mahmood Anwar. The batteries were contributed as follows:-

Headquarters Battery -		7 Division Artillery
129 Battery	-	10 Division Artillery
230 Battery	-	8 Division Artillery
131 Battery	-	15 Division Artillery

In 1965 the regiment was commanded by Lt Col Mohammad Hussain Ansari. It was a fortunate appointment. Ansari had seen active service in Burma with a mountain regiment. He had done two tours as instructor gunnery, the last one as chief instructor. Brig Nawazish (106 Brigade) used to say, "Ansari's entrails are made of artillery pamphlets". Nawazish was right.

38 Field Regiment was raised at Sialkot in October 1962 by Lt Col P. B. Gilani. The batteries were contributed as follows:—

Headquarter Battery	15 Division Artillery
139 Battery	- 15 Division Artillery
140 Battery	- 1 Corps Artillery
141 Battery	- 4 Corps Artillery

In 1965 the unit was commanded by Lt Col Abdul Hamid Tamton, a tough, outspoken Moplah with the frenzied courage of his Arab ancestors.

Towards the end of July on orders from General Headquarters, 35 Heavy and 37 Locating Regiments were withdrawn to Harbanspura in Lahore. 11 Division was promised 22 Field to fill the gap left by departure of 35 Heavy. Also 11 Division Artillery retained a survey troop and a meteorological section from 37 Locating Regiment.

On 10 August, barely four days after the unleashing of 'freedom fighters' in Kashmir, 11 Division received orders to refrain from any kind of provocative action. All military movement within five hundred yards of the border was prohibited. In third week of August Medium Regiment less battery arrived from Quetta and deployed in Kasur. On 29 August 2 Frontier Force joined 11 Division. On 31 August 26 Field arrived from 7 Division. The unit was without a commanding officer or second-in-command. The previous commanding officer Lt Col A. H. Tamton had been posted to 38 Field on 13 August. Earlier on, the second-in-command Maj Maqbool-ur-Rehman Qazi was attached to 7 Division Artillery. Tamton found himself back in 26 Field, temporarily, until the arrival of new commanding officer. Meanwhile Lt Col M. H. Ansari exercised command over 35 Heavy and 38 Field Regiment. He did a superb job.

On 1 September some staff officer from Headquarters 1 Corps (Gujranwala) telephoned that four Indian aircraft had been shot down by Pakistan Air Force in Chamb. Indian Air Force 'might' retaliate against West Pakistan. Thereupon GOC 11 Division ordered deployment of anti-aircraft units.

15 Lancers was 1 Corps reconnaissance regiment stationed in Lahore. In July it was placed under command 11 Division. It was equipped with M24 light tanks mounting a 75 millimetre gun. The regiment was commanded by Lt Col Iskandar-ul-Karim, an East Pakistani, who never raised his voice and never lost his smile, however desperate the situation.

On 5 September at 1000 hours Karim arrived in the regiment to the buzz of rumours of war. Throughout 5 September the colonel tried to get through to 1 Corps for orders about filling up tanks with petrol and ammunition. There was no response. Too many people were trying to get through to corps headquarters. Sometimes during night 5/6 September Karim ordered the tanks to be prepared for battle. On the brink of war it may seem odd for a commanding officer to seek orders from corps headquarters to break open ammunition boxes and load his tanks. Odd indeed, but those were the orders. At first light 6 September 15 Lancers moved off towards Kasur. Just before they emerged from the shelter of trees near Kot Lakhpat Indian aircraft had shot up some civilian vehicles and a camel caravan.

On night 4/5 September 39 Battery 12 Medium Regiment received orders to move into Kashmir. On evening 5 September 21 Brigade left by road for Bhimber. 11 Division was now left with five infantry battalions. The war was less than twelve hours away.

Headquarters 1 Corps Artillery was located at Multan along with 35 Heavy and 37 Locating regiments. Brig M. J. Kiani was the commander. In May 1965 the group received

orders to move to Raiwind to support II Division. For the next five weeks they reconnoitred and surveyed gun positions and targets. By middle of June Headquarters 1 Corps Artillery returned to Multan. On 23 August it was ordered to Gujranwala to co-ordinate artillery support in Sialkot. Maj Arshad, GSO-2 (operations) 1 Corps Artillery, arrived in Sialkot on 25 September and immediately proceeded to liaise with 8 and 15 Division artillery units. Fortunately 4 Corps Artillery had done considerable amount of work in this respect. Nevertheless Arshad went over the whole area himself confirming targets and fire units. He had just about finished the job by evening 5 September. Next day the headquarters was ordered into Kasur. They were in 11 Division Artillery Headquarters by 2000 hours 6 September.

Sometime during night 5/6 September Gen Hamid ordered occupation of defensive positions. It was none too soon. For 38 Field and 12 Medium regiments the order posed no problem. 35 Heavy and 37 Locating were in Lahore. At 2030 hours Maj Naqi drove to Lahore to get the two regiments into battle locations. He got in contact with the units by 2330 hours and ordered them to move forthwith. The road parties stepped out at 0100 hours 6 September. The 8 inch howitzers and 155 millimetre guns were to move by rail.

Lt Col M. H. Ansari (35 Heavy) was living with Headquarters 106 Brigade. At about 0500 hours he was shaken out of bed by thumps of falling shells. His orderly appeared with a mug of tea as if it was normal routine. Ansari tried to get through to his guns in Lahore. There was no answer. He got through to Headquarters 10 Division. No

one seemed to know the where about of the 8 inch howitzers. Ansari pleaded, "Please tell Hijazi to move the guns by road via Niaz Beg distributary". Maj Hijazi, second-in-command 35 Heavy, had served with Ansari in 14 Field and in the Artillery School. Hijazi responded as expected even without getting the message. At 1700 hours a worried Ansari heard Hijazi's voice on telephone, "Regiment ready on theatre grid".

Capt Inam-ul-Haq, adjutant 35 Heavy, was on ten days leave trying to settle his family who had been rendered homeless due to fighting in Kashmir. He was in Pindi Bhattian when caught up by a telegram ordering him to report for duty forthwith. He arrived in Kasur to the sound of Indian shelling. For the next four days Inam worked in civilian clothes. Fortunately he was too well known to be mistaken for a '**Jasoos**' (spy).

At 1600 hours 4 September Capt Iqbal (37 Locating) reported to Lt Col Sahibzad Gul 'Sabzi' at Gandasingh Wala rest house. Iqbal had surveyed the area from Gandasingh Wala through Sejra along Ruhi nullah to Bedian. He wondered about the nature of the mission. Sabzi told him, "Let us move and you will know".

The pair proceeded along a track through Manalam Kalan to Sejra. The ground on either side of the track had white patches fringed with tufts of ugly grass. It was in a triangle between three water courses, where the water table towards the end of monsoon was expected to be high. However the soil varied from patch to patch. And Sabzi set out to discover where the ground would not grudge passage of tanks. Every

eight hundred yards or so Sabzi would dismount bore a hole with his auger, smell the soil, grunt and move on. After a couple of hours Iqbal asked, "How many tanks do you expect to get through on this miserable track" ? Sabzi said, "A troop will do but a squadron would be a gift from God". Later on he led a squadron through Sejra on to Valtoha. He rode the command tank on top of turret. While passing through Valtoha his chest was splintered by a machine-gun burst.

At 0515 hours 6 September Capt Mubarak, 12 Medium observer with 7 Punjab, reported Indian tanks and infantry forming up behind Khem Karn custom post. Artillery was not to open fire without permission from the GOC 11 Division. The information was relayed to Gen Hamid. Mubarak was authorized to engage the enemy as soon as they trespassed into Pakistan territory. At 0545 hours Mubarak reported, "Squadron of Indian tanks and an infantry battalion over-running Khem Karn custom post". As soon as the enemy came ahead of the post they made appointment with sixty medium shells. Four tanks were hit and the remainder force turned back. Mubarak ordered one battery to fire air-burst, which was the proper treatment for exposed infantry. Mubarak was a reservist officer who had been out of uniform for nine years. But his gunnery was exactly right for the occasion. He was recommended for Sitara-i-Jurat.

At 0600 hours Capt Basit (38 Field), observer with 1 East Bengal, reported Bedian ranger post overrun by the enemy. Four divisional artillery concentrations convinced the Indians about the futility of further advance.

At 0800 hours an Indian infantry battalion and some tanks occupied village Ruhiwal fifteen hundred yards inside Pakistan. Alpha company 7 Punjab (Maj Yunas) was ordered to counter-attack forthwith. Lt Imtiaz Malik, 12 Medium, was detailed as forward observer. As Alpha company came within sight of Ruhiwal they saw enemy infantry digging defences, Imtiaz requested Maj Yunas that Alpha company should assault after he had administered some treatment to the objective. Yunas agreed. The artillery observer ordered regimental concentration with air-burst ammunition 'Tango - Oscar - Tango'. Two minutes later twelve medium shells burst immediately above the heads of enemy infantry. Alpha company saw some innocuous mushrooms in the air, some bit of sputtering earth, and then no upright bodies on the objective. When our troops reached Ruhiwal they found sixty bodies torn up by the air-burst. The dead included two artillery observers Lt Padam and Lt Sharma. Maj Malkit Singh and six other lanks were captured. Maj Yunas was awarded Sitara-i-Jurat for the attack.

Indian attacks against Bedian, Khem Karn and Ruhiwal had been made by troops of 4 Mountain Division. They were severely punished by Pakistan Artillery.

During night 6/7 September 5 Armoured Brigade, ex 1 Armoured Division, was placed under command 11 Division for establishing a bridge-head across Ruhi nullah. In order to support the bridge-head the following units from 1 Armoured Division Artillery were placed under command 11 Division Artillery:-

3	(SP) Regiment	- Direct support 5 Armoured Brigade
15	(S) Regiment	
21	Medium Regiment	

Commander Artillery 1 Corps played little part in co-ordinating fire support of units of 1 Armoured Division, 11 Division, and 1 Corps Artillery. The failure became noticeable when 1 Armoured Division ran into stiff opposition ; which opposition needed treatment with all available guns; which treatment should have been worked out by Headquarters 1 Corps Artillery.

11 Division was deficient of its organic supply and transport battalion. Dumping of ammunition was therefore carried out with transport borrowed from 1 Armoured Division and civil vehicles picked off the road.

At 2100 hours Brig Ahsan Rashid Shami Commander Artillery 1 Armoured Division called on Headquarters 11 Division Artillery. He asked for 15 (SP) to be released to join 4 Armoured Brigade immediately after establishment of bridge-head by 2 Frontier Force. The attack across Ruhi nullah was to be made by 2 Frontier Force, its objective to secure the far bank so as to facilitate the operations of 5 Armoured Brigade and later on 1 Armoured Division. The fire support consisted of following units :-

26 Field Regiment
12 Medium Regiment

15 (SP) Regiment
21 Medium Regiment

During night 6/7 September the engineers started to construct class 60 bridge over Ruhi nullah. The bridge was completed at 0800 hours 7 September. At 0530 hours 7 September tired Brig Sahib Dad, commander 21 Brigade, trudged into 11 Division Headquarters. Gen Hamid had one look at him and ordered the brigade to rest for six hours. 21 Brigade had been constantly on the move for last thirty six hours, between Kasur, Kharian and back to Kasur.

At about 0900 hours tanks of 6 Lancers started crossing BRB. The first tank commanded by Maj Utra went over the side of the bridge and turned turtle. All the crew were drowned. Capt Mokeet (15 Lancers) with the reflexes of a panther, led his tanks over the damaged bridge, before the shock of initial mishap paralysed every one. There was no more hesitation among the following tanks. 6 Lancers was commanded by Lt Col Sahibzad Gul. 'Sabzi' was a short statured, big hearted officer who needed very little provocation to get ignited. Surprisingly, in the course of battle he did not allow his impatience to get the better of his professionalism.

6 Lancers were followed by 1 Frontier Force. By 1500 hours nine tanks of 6 Lancers were across Ruhi nullah in the bridge-head established by 2 Frontier Force. Sabzj met Mokeet on home bank of Ruhi nullah and said, "I think there is very little opposition. We ought to do some thing. Let us see how many tanks and infantry you can gather". Mokeet

collected a company from 1 Frontier Force. Sabzi led the force along east bank of Ruhi nullah and came up behind the custom post. Two Indian tanks were shot up and about thirty prisoners brought back.

At 1700 hours 7 September, Gen Hamid issued following orders for operations on 8 September:-

- a. 21 Brigade with 5 Frontier Force to move across Ruhi nullah and occupy Khem Karn before first light 8 September.
- b. 5 Armoured Brigade to break out on Khem Karn—Bikiwind and Khem Karn—Valtoha axis at first light 8 September. Bravo Squadron 15 Lancers to protect left flank of 5 Armoured Brigade.
- c. 1 Armoured Division to build up in bridgehead and be prepared for final break out.

It may be remembered that there was no corps % headquarters to control operations of 1 Armoured and 11 Division. GOC 11 Division was made responsible for the co-ordination, in addition to commanding his own division. No additional staff or communications were provided to 11 Division. In fact 11 Division was deficient in staff and communication normally authorised to an infantry division.

On 7 May 1 Armoured Division received orders to move into its concentration area. Maj Gen Nasir GOC 1 Armoured Division informed General Headquarters that the move had been completed within 48 hours of receipt of orders. This

was a physical impossibility. In fact it took about ten days to complete the concentration. While in the concentration area the brigade and unit commanders were not permitted to visit each other or their commands. Approximately sixty men died of snake bite. But Nasir seemed totally unconcerned about the waste.

In the "History of Indian Artillery" Brig Y.B. Gulati has said that Nasir did not have the skill of a good barber. In fact Nasir spent most of his conscious hours listening to tales carried by the headquarter's barber. The brigade and regimental commanders were good professional men. But with Nasir as GOC they did not have a chance.

The absence of a corps headquarters to co-ordinate operations of two divisions led to a confusion of orders. According to 11 Division war diary; at 1700 hours 7 September Gen Hamid issued following orders for operations on 8 September :—

- a. 21 Brigade with 5 Frontier Force to move into bridge-head after last light 7 September. This was completed by 2000 hours.
- b. 1 Armoured Division to build up in bridge-head and be poised for the final break out.

According to 1 Armoured Division war diary Maj Gen Nasir gave out following orders at 1800 hours on 7 September:—

- a. 3 Armoured Brigade with 6 Lancers ex 11 Division to advance along Sobraon branch (Green route) and secure Beas bridge.
- b. 4 Armoured Brigade to advance along Kasur branch (Brown route) and cut Grand Trunk road in area Jandiala Guru.
- c. 12 Cavalry to follow 4 Armoured Brigade and secure class 50/60 bridges over Kasur branch.
- d. 5 Armoured Brigade reverts under command and will come in reserve.
- e. Division centre line—Green route.

3 Armoured Brigade was commanded by Brig Moin-ud-Din., 4 Armoured Brigade by Brig Lumb and 5 Armoured Brigade by Brig Bashir.

On 8 September 1965, General Headquarter issued instructions to 1 Armoured Division to "Overrun maximum enemy territory", after breaking out from the bridge-head. By first light 8 September the bridge-head across Ruhi nullah was not large enough to accommodate 3 and 4 Armoured Brigades. I Armoured Division plans were modified as follows :—

- a. 4 Armoured Brigade to advance along Sobraon branch (Green route) on arrival in bridge-head and destroy bridge at Harike.

- b. 5 Armoured Brigade (who were already in bridge-head) to advance on road Khem Karn-Amritsar remaining west of Kasur branch.
- c. 12 Cavalry to advance along Kasur branch and secure bridges en route.
- d. 3 Armoured Brigade (who were to come last in the bridge-head) in reserve.

Meanwhile 5 Frontier Force (21 Brigade) relieved 1 Frontier Force during night 7/8 September. 6 Lancers and 5 Frontier Force captured Khem Karn at 1000 hours and at 1400 hours were a thousand yards short of Valtoha.

The confusion of orders between I Armoured Division and 11 Division tried out the tempers of artillery commanders. Guns of 1 Armoured Division, 11 Division and 1 Corps Artillery had been deployed behind Ruhi nullah to support attack on Khem Karn. In order to support further advance field guns had to be repositioned. Also, 155 millimetre guns had to be moved forward to cover forward moves of 3 (SP), 21 Medium and 26 Field regiments. Brig Shami, anticipating problems of continuous artillery support for leading elements, moved in his command jeep immediately behind 6 Lancers. At 0830 hours he called forward reconnaissance parties of 3 (SP) and 21 Medium and allotted gun areas. At about 1000 hours Lt Col Maqbool Mahmood (21 Medium) arrived on scene and ordered the gun position officers to proceed to mile 38, road Khem Karn-Amritsar and contact Maj Wahid for new gun position. Wahid (second-in-command) was found on the north-east

edge of Khem Karn sheltered by a crumbling brick wall, peppered by machine gun and mortar fire. A mortar shell landed near a survey vehicle and a jawan tumbled out with torn abdomen. 21 Medium guns deployed near custom post at 1600 hours. The guns were hardly in position when the area was hit by enemy aircraft. Two vehicles blew up under the impact of rockets. The guns remained untouched.

15 (SP) was commanded by Lt Col Ihsan-ul-Haq Malik. On 7 September the regiment was placed in direct support of 4 Armoured Brigade. At 1430 hours the brigade was alerted for move to Sialkot. The orders were cancelled within the hour. At 0630 hours on 8 September Ihsan called on 4 Armoured Brigade and was informed about orders for advance beyond Khem Karn. By midnight 15 (SP) were across Ruhi nullah and dispersed. On 9 September four Indian aircraft strafed and rocketted gun area. There were seventeen casualties including Technical Assistant Zafarullah, killed.

4 Armoured Brigade received new orders to advance along Khem Karn-Mastgarh-Bura Karimpur track and cut the road Khem Karn-Amritsar at Chima. At 1100 hours Brig Lumb gave out following orders:-

- a. 5 Horse less squadron, with under command company 10 Frontier Force, lead advance and cut road at Chima.
- b. 10 Frontier Force less company, with under command squadron 5 Horse, to follow 5 Horse.
- c. 4 Cavalry in reserve.

d. 15 (SP) - Direct support.

15 (SP) reported ready at 1200 hours 9 September. 5 Horse moved off at 1300 hours and captured Mastgarh by 1500 hours. Lt Hassan Zaidi, forward observer with 5 Horse, shot up some enemy infantry abandoning their positions. There was no other opposition. Mastgarh was secured by 1530 hours, and 10 Frontier Force moved off toward Bura Karimpur. 15 (SP) redeployed in area north-east of Khem Karn and reported ready by 2000 hours. 4 Armoured Brigade leaguered for the night in Mastgarh.

On 8 September Maj Ateeq Ahmad joined 3 (SP) as second-in-command. Ateeq was GSO-2 in General Headquarters when the war started. Ateeq was an honours graduate in physics, a graduate of Staff College as well as Technical Staff Course (United Kingdom). He had served in 3 (SP) as 2/Lt immediately after commissioning. Like most staff officers in General Headquarters Ateeq got the news about Indian attack from Radio Pakistan. He saw a friend in Military Secretary's Branch and asked for posting to 3 (SP). He was posted to 6 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. Undaunted, Ateeq boarded a bus for Lahore. From Shahdara he hitch-hiked and landed in 3 (SP) when the regiment was already deployed across Ruhi nullah supporting attack on Khem Karn.

Meanwhile 6 Lancers advanced on Valtoha and 24 Cavalry moved towards Chima. At 1430 hours both the groups were held up by anti-tank and artillery fire. At about the same time Indian aircraft hit the attacking columns and also 3 (SP) gun position. Three vehicles, including one

ammunition vehicle, were hit. Four gunners were killed and four wounded. On 9 September Lt Col Sahibzad Gul was killed while approaching Valtoha. Sabzi rode his tank on top of turret. He received machine gun burst in the chest. The signal operator continued passing orders to squadrons as if the commanding officer was still alive.

At 2300 hours 9 September 3 (SP) was deployed a thousand yards south-east of Khem Karn to support attack on Valtoha. Maj Ikram joined 3 (SP) on evening 9 September. He was attending Staff Course at Quetta when the war started. At that time the Staff College was running two courses, viz: Staff Course and War Course. The College closed shop and students and instructors chatted around speculating or influencing their postings. On morning 7 September Ikram was informed about his posting to 3 (SP), and given reservation on Bolan Mail. The reservation consisted of a seat in an intermediate class compartment with about ten other officers. The artillery officers included Lt Col Atta Malik and Capt Afzaal Ahmad.

Lt Col Rao Farman Ali, Lt Col 'Bobby' Ashraf and Lt Col 'Dandy' Aslam sought out Ikram before he boarded the train. They were old 3 (SP) hands and each pressed on Ikram his own favourite battery; as if Ikram had the option.

At 2030 hours 8 September the train rolled into Lahore and the soldiers spent the night in the local transit camp. Next morning they hitch hiked to their units. Ikram landed in his regiment before sun-set and went round the batteries looking for an empty slot. Two of his uncles, Honorary Capt Sanobur Khan and Honorary Capt Fazal Dad Khan MC had

served in 26 (Jammu & Kashmir) Battery. Earlier during the day the battery command post had been strafed and Technical Assistant Hav Mohammad Iqbal killed. But seeing Ikram the men greeted him with broad smiles and mugs of scalding tea. At 1930 hours the regiment was ordered to move forward. Ikram being the senior officer present led the gun group. He had no map but the meaning of order 'move forward' could not be mistaken in the light of gun flashes. Some distance short of Khem Karn the gun group was met by Ateeq and the guns were led off to their positions. Tkram rolled out his bed and went to sleep. Some time later he was shaken by a blood curdling shriek "Snake". The sentry had his eyes falling out of his head. There was no snake.

Lt Col Ghulam Hussain ('GH') had bedded down next door. While they were recounting old days of 3 (SP) the wine waiter, Gul Mohammad, turned up with food ! No wonder any officer who served in the regiment during Gul's tenure never forgot the man.

On Morning 10 September Maj Ali Abid Hussain, 26 (Jammu & Kashmir) Battery was moving in his jeep along with 24 Cavalry. A shell burst about five yards from the jeep and Abid was killed with a chestful of splinters. As a cadet Abid was a senior under officer in Pakistan Military Academy. He was a graduate of Staff College as well as Gunnery Staff Course. He was a good gunner. Ikram was posted to replace Abid. It was not the way Ikram wanted 26 (Jammu & Kashmir) Battery.

On 9 September Lt Col Altaf Elahi Malik, Headquarters 1

Corps Artillery was having dinner when Brig Jan Kiani ordered him to deploy 113 Battery (155 millimetre guns) so as to support 1 Armoured Division operations beyond Khem Karn. Altaf drove over to the battery position on road Kasur—Gandasingh Wala. The guns were shelling targets in Ferozepur. Altaf took the gun position officer, Lt Tariq, to select the new gun position. Every now and then they were challenged by trigger happy sentries. Every one was seeing guerillas everywhere.

The contagion had started in General Headquarters. On 8 September military personnel were ordered to carry arms. By mid-day stens and rifles and bandoliers started appearing in General Headquarters. The civilian personnel had no such assurance. But these truly brave people controlled their various fears with smiles.

In 52 Brigade headquarters Altaf asked the brigade major for location of units and their personnel. The gentleman showed complete ignorance. He did not know Altaf and there were guerillas all round ! Altaf left in disgust. When Altaf and Tariq got near Kasur rest house they sensed presence of troops and stopped behind a building. There was a clicking of bolts. The two officers retreated and hugging the escarpment selected position for guns near Nikka Phatu village. At 0300 hours a tired Altaf returned to 52 Brigade headquarters, to inform them about deployment of guns. The brigade major was suspicious and tried to grill the colonel. Altaf was at about the end of his tether when Maj Shujaat (12 Medium) turned up and saved the situation.

Lt Col Atta Malik was attending War Course in Staff College Quetta. On 7 September he was informed about his posting to 26 Field. The DAA & QMG Staff College regretted that no seat was available in air-conditioned compartment. Atta said, "That's easy. You mark third class as air-conditioned. The purpose of the exercise is to get to my unit, as soon as possible". Atta was directed to report to reinforcement camp at Jhelum. From Lahore to Jhelum the entire population seemed to be up in arms hunting for guerillas ; and few indeed knew the meaning of the word, or the consequences of unbridled man-hunts. At Jhelum Atta learned that 26 Field was in 11 Division which was located somewhere in Luliani, half way between Lahore and Kasur. He reached Luliani at mid-day 10 September and asked a military police N/Sub about location of division headquarters. The N/Sub said, "An Indian Lt Col is operating as guerilla leader in this area. Let me see your identity card". Atta produced the document. With ill-concealed suspicion the military policemen led him to division headquarters.

Col Shirin advised Atta to bed down in the headquarters. Next morning, 11 September, he drove to Khem Karn. In 26 Field he was greeted by Lt Col Tamton and Sub Maj Aslam Beg an old friend from 8 (SP) Battery in 1947. Next he went to 21 Brigade and informed the commander that he, Atta, had come to replace Tamton.- Brig Sahib Dad seemed exasperated, "How many gunners ami going to get in this war" ? Atta shot back, "Do not worry. This is a permanent marriage". Sahib Dad recognised Atta from their Nowshera

days when the latter was commanding 2 Field Regiment. They embraced each other and never regretted the reunion.

Thereafter the two officers went forward and walked through 5 Frontier Force position. The battalion was commanded by Lt Col Mumtaz; steady and well collected under fire. The battalion was thin on the ground, even when every one was stretched out in forward trenches. Brig Sahib Dad ordered 6 Baluch to occupy positions on left in depth of 5 Frontier Force. Originally 6 Baluch was to relieve 5 Frontier Force during night 11/12 September. Sahib Dad cancelled the relief. The foresight paid off in later fighting.

Atta went round the gun position and observation posts and impressed on every one the virtues of digging. To underline his words the Indians sent over a few salvos.

At 0700 hours 10 September 4 Armoured Brigade resumed advance to take Chima with an out-flanking move from west. The advance was resumed from Mastgarh and led by 4 Cavalry. In the maze of tracks, 4 Cavalry instead of heading towards Bura Karimpur took the track towards Sankatra. Finding no enemy at this place they advanced towards Lakhna. At 1100 hours they had an exchange with a troop of Indian tanks two of which were shot up.

Gen Hamid was up in his helicopter and found 4 Cavalry on the wrong track. He landed at 4 Armoured Brigade headquarters and ordered

4 Cavalry to turn towards Mahmoodpura. Another force was to turn right and capture Chima from west. Thereupon Brig Lumb ordered 4 Cavalry and 10 Frontier Force, with under command squadron 5 Horse, to execute the orders. 10 Frontier Force were in Sankatra, close behind 4 Cavalry, when they received the orders. They took the route Duha-Kahna - Kalanjar - Chima.

4 Armoured Brigade lost contact with 4 Cavalry shortly thereafter. In the meantime squadron 12 Cavalry, operating on right of 4 Cavalry, reported heavy vehicular movement in the far distance, not knowing it was 5 Armoured Brigade. In the cross movement 10 Frontier Force got confronted with Squadron 12 Cavalry. There was a sharp exchange of fire. 10 Frontier Force noticing some tanks trying to encircle them hastily withdrew from the area. No information was conveyed to 4 Armoured Brigade headquarters. f

At 1300 hours Lt Col Nazir (4 Cavalry) reported of **on** command net that he had met artillery fire in Mahmoodpura and was outflanking it to reach the objective. At 1400 hours he reported his location a thousand yards short of mile 32, road Kasur -Amritsar. Thereafter 4 Cavalry went off the air altogether. At 1400 hours 3 Armoured Brigade received orders to move to Lahore. The brigade had moved into the bridge-head a few hours earlier. The withdrawal orders came at the wrong psychological moment. 4 and 5 Armoured Brigade attacks had already stalled and the rearward move of 3 Armoured Brigade was by no means a reassuring sight.

At mid-day 10 September Lt Col Ghulam Hussain, 3 (SP), took Maj Raja Ikram toward Khem Karn. Near the level crossing they spotted Brig Ahsan Rashid Shami. Ikram was a favourite of Shami and the brigadier expressed his joy with a warm hug. Ghulam Hussain handed over the fire plan for attack on Assal Uttar. Shami said, "Let us go and see why no forward movement". Near mile 38 they were greeted by Indian Artillery. Brig Bashir, commander 5 Armoured Brigade stopped them. Shami stood away from the slit trench sheltering others. He ordered the artillery officers around him to take bearings on sound of enemy guns. Every one got to work and the shelling was forgotten. Ikram scrambled up a tree to spot enemy observation post. The tree itself had been used by an Indian observer. Ikram recovered a map and two magazines of 7.62 millimetre carbine. Sometime later Shami got into his jeep and took Bashir along with him. They shot off towards Chima. Lt Col Ghulam Hussain followed in his own jeep. After about twenty minutes later the colonel's jeep returned. The signal operator informed Ikram that Shami had been killed and Ghulam Hussain wanted another jeep. Ikram went forward with his jeep. He stopped near Ghulam Hussain. A little distance away was commander artillery's jeep, turned off the road, askance, its sta plate clearly visible.

Tanks had been called forward to rescue the two brigadiers. The tanks were led by Maj Sher Altaf, a handsome and spirited cavalry officer. As Sher Altaf rushed up he was met by machine gun and anti-tank fire. Sher Altaf lost a leg. His tank withdrew, its gun pointing towards the rear.

Shami had been hit in the head with a machine gun bullet. He died instantly, in the middle of battle, at the peak of his pride, exactly as he wished to. He used to say, "It is a shame to let a good hunter die of decrepitude".

The Indians recovered Shami's body and buried him with full military honours. After cease fire the body was handed over to 3 (SP) with appropriate ceremony. It was carried on a gun provided by 26 (Jammu & Kashmir) Battery, which Shami had commanded during the days of the birth of our nation. Shami was an exacting task master. His favourite theme was, "There is no room for lectures in the army. You teach the chap the right thing and give him orders. Either he carries out orders or he gets punished".

The failure of our troops to make a rapid and worthwhile penetration may be attributed to lack of corps headquarters, which deficiency led to a confusion of command, inadequate planning and piece meal commitment of forces. After the failure of enemy attacks across west of Ruhi nullah Indian forces withdrew to a line behind Valtoha. Expenditure of ammunition of our artillery units supporting armour advance on 9 September amounted to an average of 13 rounds per gun. This gives an indication of the weak nature of opposition. At Valtoha and Chima the Indians had strong covering troops ; which should have been anticipated if armour operations had been properly conceived. We had seventy two field guns, thirty medium guns and twelve heavy guns which could support armour advance. In the absence of a corps headquarters the fire power available for supporting attack was not employed to optimum effect.

11 September was used for reorganisation. Gen Hamid gave out his orders for resumption of advance on 12 September. He was caught half way by orders from General Headquarters. At 1900 hours 1 Armoured Division, less 5 Armoured Brigade, were ordered to move to Gujranwala forthwith. 4 Armoured Brigade was to proceed to Daska whereas 5 Armoured Brigade was to stay with 11 Division. 3 Armoured Brigade had already departed for Lahore.

The Indians were also reorganising.

At 0900 hours 12 September, having learnt about the departure of 1 Armoured Division, the enemy attacked along the main road Khem Karn - Kasur with an infantry brigade and a regiment worth of tanks. The attack was beaten back with artillery fire. At 1100 hours 4 Sikh Battalion infiltrated across Sutlej river to within five hundred yards of 3 (SP) position. The artillery position was flanked by Capt Mokeet's tank. Mokeet was walking from one tank to another when he saw the dried up crops suddenly turn olive drab as a battalion of Indian infantry started advancing. One of Mokeet's tanks deployed ahead of 3 (SP) fired a whole belt towards the Sikhs. In his excitement the gunner aimed too high. But the firing had the desired result. The Indians threw down their weapons. Another party of Sikhs ran in front of 3 (SP), was spotted by Lt Masud and engaged with air-burst. The Indians surrendered. Mokeet's tanks and 26 Battery collected about three hundred prisoners.

At 1600 hours three Indian tanks charged the left flank of 5 Frontier Force across Khem Karn distributary. During the

Indian preparatory bombardment a recoil-less rifle position of 5 Frontier Force was hit. The gunner was wounded and was carried back to the regimental aid post by the other two men of the detachment. At this critical moment Maj Khadim (Headquarter Squadron 24 Cavalry) had come up with replenishments. Also Hav Gulmar Jan Masud, driver of Lt Col Mumtaz (5 Frontier Force) was coming forward to battalion command post. Khadim and Gulmar both rushed to the abandoned recoil-less rifle jeep. Khadim got into the gunner's seat and Gulmar acted as loader.

The first tank was hit at about 150 yards from the gun. Gulmar reloaded immediately and Khadim hit the second tank even before the smoke from the first round had completely cleared. It was too much to expect that Khadim's luck would hold out for a third shot. Indeed the tank commanded by Lt Sharma out shot Khadim. But Sharma's triumph was short lived. A non-runner tank of 24 Cavalry hit him in the side. As the Indian officer came out of the tank, with typical cavalry swagger, he said to his captors, "Do you mind if I remove my steel helmet" ?

Khadim and Gulmar s bodies were shattered and burned almost beyond recognition. But the recognition of their gallantry was far from spontaneous. It took three recommendations and as many weeks for Sitara-i-Jurat for Khadim and Tamgha-i-Jurat for Gulmar to come through. In 11 Division their gallantry remains a legend.

At 1800 hours 10 September Col Shaukat Riza arrived in 11 Division Headquarters to take over command of 11

Division Artillery He spent the next two days visiting gun positions and observation posts. On 13 September the following orders were issued to reorganise artillery support for defence of 11 Division area :—

- a. Critical fighting will take place in area between Mastgarh - Bura Kuhna - Gajjal.
- b. Heavy and medium gun positions will be readjusted to provide maximum concentration in above area.
- c. Artillery units supporting Khem Karn front will be controlled by Forward Neelum command post set up by residual elements of 1 Corps Artillery.
- d. Artillery units, other than above, supporting Bedian and Gandasingh Wala, will be controlled by Neelum command post manned by Headquarters 11 Division Artillery.
- e. Engagement of targets restricted to observed fire.
- f. Overhead cover for guns and ammunition to be constructed.
- g. No move to alternative positions.
- h. 11 Division Artillery tactical headquarter with tactical headquarter 11 Division near 21 Brigade.

On 21 September, 147 Battery, newly raised at Campbellpur, joined 12 Medium.

At about mid-day 12 September Indian tanks and infantry closed up within four hundred yards of our forward

localities. Lt Col Atta Malik requested permission from Sahib Dad to engage them with medium and heavy guns.

Permission granted.

The artillery concentration blew up enemy troops. One tank, however, ran over Capt Qamar's (forward observer) trench. It was hit by a recoil-less rifle and out came Lt Verma, son of Maj Gen Verma. Capt Raja Basharat, battery commander with 5 Frontier Force, could not just sit in battalion headquarters. He got himself an observation post. Towards the evening Basharat got his shoot:—

"Hello four one. Enemy infantry and tanks assaulting. Engage Delta Foxtrot 4567. Scale any many. Do not worry. We shall Insha-Allah beat them back".

Lt Col Atta Malik vetted each target before giving permission to engage. On one occasion Basharat called for fire on a retreating enemy. Atta reprimanded :.—

"Where is your chivalry man ? We do not fire on a
retreating enemy".

The control of fire saved ammunition. 11 Division artillery ammunition expenditure was minimum even though its bag of enemy aircraft, tanks and infantry was the highest.

At about 2200 hours 14 September a civilian driver turned up at tactical headquarters 11 Division Artillery. He had a slip of paper with "26 Field" written on it. He said he had brought some ammunition from Lahore. The Indians

were carrying out their normal harassing fire. The civilian seemed unaware of the shelling. The commander artillery asked him, "Are'nt you afraid" ? The driver said, "Of what"?

Some three hours later an observer in 106 Brigade area requested permission to engage a target with all available guns. The target was at 4000 yards distance from the observer and was described as enemy armoured brigade forming up for attack. The commander artillery had visited the observation post in question, and knew that its observation was limited to 1000 yards during daylight. How was it that the observer could spot an armoured brigade at 4000 yards distance at 0200 hours? He could not. He had been ordered to fire by the supported commander!

Later in the morning Lt Arshad Mahmood (35 Heavy) observer with 1 East Bengal saw some tanks and infantry advancing near Thatti Jaimal Singh. The officer moved forward for better observation. He was wounded in the calf but quickly got down to engaging the enemy with 8 inch howitzers. One tank was hit, bodily lifted and dropped down with its crotch towards the sky. Arshad was awarded Sitara-i-Jurat.

Towards evening 15 September an observer with 21 Brigade asked for divisional artillery concentration to engage enemy heavy mortar battery coming into action near Assal Uttar. Permission was granted. A few minutes later he repeated the request, this time to engage a medium battery. Again permission was granted. He made a third request, as according to him he had seen an artillery observation plane

landing in Assal Uttar. This time permission was denied. Next morning the commander artillery and his CO visited the observation post. The JCO looked very sheepish.

There was no shortage of ammunition on the Indian side. Every day they sent over four thousand shells, presumably for harassment. None of our guns was hit; and the shelling was accepted as gratuitous battle inoculation.

Gen Hamid appreciated that the Indians would make every effort to recover Khem Karn in order to slash Pakistan's bargaining position after cease-fire. Orders were therefore issued to strengthen defences and maintain aggressive patrolling.

11 Division was thin on the ground. When Indian preparatory bombardment started on night 21 September Lt Col Nasar Uliah Khan (24 Cavalry) turned to his artillery friend Maj Ikram 3 (SP):—

"What is the depth of our defences, Ikram"?

"Eighteen inches".

"What is the joke"?

"No joke. The width of a trench is eighteen inches. And that is all that seven infantry battalions can manage on division front of this size".

The troops had been through continuous fighting for sixteen days. All showed signs of wear. But the response to a

visiting commander remained a clicking of heels, a broad smile, a hearty cheer, "Theek hai saab", and a mug of tea.

In spite of our shortage of troops the Indians were prevented from contacting main defences before night 21 September. Every time a company was taken out for patrolling there was a hole in the defence system. But the risk was justified. Gen Hamid conducted the battle from under a mango tree, or moving from battalion to battalion in an unarmed helicopter, even while enemy fighter planes roamed over-head. From his expression it appeared that the enemy hadn't a ghostly chance of making any dent in 11 Division.

On afternoon 12 September General Headquarters passed request from PAF for destruction of enemy radar located at Ferozepur air-field. The target was heavily defended by anti-aircraft artillery and it was thought it would suit the style of 11 Division Artillery. The assignment was accepted with pleasure. PAF was requested for 1/25,000 scale air photos of target and surrounding area. Two medium batteries, one 8 inch howitzers battery and one 155 millimetre gun battery were detailed for the task. Lt Col Bashir, 12 Medium, volunteered to co-ordinate the operation. The gun positions were occupied on night 17 September. At 2300 hours the target was engaged with 50 rounds per gun. Immediately thereafter the guns were withdrawn to original positions.

Next morning Indian aircraft beat up the landscape suspected of harbouring guns. The PAF reported that the

troublesome radar had not been destroyed as it continued to operate. Artillery 11 Division requested for post bombardment photos of Ferozepur air-field. Next day the photographs arrived along with a vote of thanks from PAF. Ferozepur air-field was a mass of shambles. Large holes had been gouged out of the runway, and no building had its head upright.

On afternoon 21 September the Indians captured our covering screen positions in Bura Kuhna and Thatti Jaimal Singh. Sub Mohammad Hussain, 3 (SP), forward observer ahead of Bura Kuhna, was hit by a tank shell. Within the hour two contradictory reports reached commander artillery. 21 Brigade reported that the observer and his party had disappeared under enemy shelling. 3 (SP) Regiment reported that Mohammad Hussain had been killed and there was no friendly infantry in vicinity. The observer had a map marked with our defensive fire plan. Naturally every one was worried. Some time later the observer's body along with map was brought back by his driver, signal operator and technical assistant. Sub Mohammad Hussain had established his observation post on a tree. The place was conspicuous and attracted enemy attention. But the subedar would not seek shelter. He was recommended for Sitara-i-Jurat. Period.

In 106 Brigade area during withdrawal from Thatti Jaimal Singh an officer of 7 Baluch was struck down with a shell splinter. 2/Lt Hassan (35 Heavy) forward observer with 7 Baluch, regardless of hostile shelling carried the wounded officer to safety. Hassan was awarded Imtiazi Sanad.

Around 2000 hours, night 21 September, everything went quiet. Too quiet. We were conserving ammunition. The Indians were not suffering from any such inhibition. At 2230 hours the sky around Assal Uttar was lit up as Indian artillery started its preparatory bombardment. Within a minute the crash of guns mingling with that of exploding shells shook the earth as far back as 21 Brigade headquarters. The thunder was incessant. An enemy task table found on a prisoner of war. on 23 September, indicated that two artillery brigades were firing a total of 800 rounds per minute. The Indian task table consisted of three targets, one on Khem Karn distributary, one on Khem Karn - Valtaha road and the third on police lines. Fortunately we suffered very few casualties. Within minutes of enemy bombardment the sky was pierced with red, green and white stilettos of tracer bullets as our forward troops opened up with direct fire weapons. The preparatory bombardment lasted ninety minutes. The smoke from exploding shells raced forward and at 2300 hours 21 Brigade headquarters got the smell of battle. An hour later Indian infantry was spotted advancing on 3000 yards front. Our observers held their nerve and did not call for fire until the enemy trespassed on registered targets. Then the attackers were met with 36 field guns, 30 medium guns and 8 heavy guns.

Lt Col Atta Malik did not have sufficient observers to cover 21 Brigade front. He requested Lt Col Maqbool Mahmood (21 Medium) for some help. 2/Lt Naseem volunteered for the assignment and reported to 26 Field on 19 September. Atta turned him down as Naseem's wireless

set was not functioning satisfactorily. On morning 21 September Naseem sought out Atta and with tears in his eyes requested, "Let me take just one shoot before cease-fire". He was sent to 5 Frontier Force and set up his post overlooking the main approach.

At 0300 hours 24 Cavalry deployed behind Khem Karn and sent out a squadron to Mastgarh to deal with enemy penetration in that direction. Just before first light an Indian brigade and a regiment of armour attacked area in front of Mastgarh. After five salvos of our division artillery the attackers veered off towards Khem Karn. They were again punished and what was left of Kumaon Regiment promptly surrendered.

The third attack came along the main road at 0900 hours. 2/Lt Naseem gave out his fire orders and then stood up in his post to make sure of his first kill. Enemy tanks were applying prophylactic fire and a bullet went right through Naseem's eye. He died with one brief 'Oh'. Lt Col Atta Malik who was monitoring the regiment net heard the 'Oh' and then Naseem's wireless set went dead. Maj Assad, battery commander with 5 Frontier Force, was also out of communication. Atta then conducted the shoot himself and ploughed the target for about twenty minutes. Later Assad came on air and informed Atta that the Indians had indeed been ploughed over.

A Gurkha battalion had advanced towards 5 Frontier Force. It got punch drunk and moved towards 2 Frontier

Force and an entire company was wiped out with artillery shelling.

Naseem, Basharat and Atta were recommended for Sitara-i-Jurat by commander 21 Brigade, commander artillery 11 Division and by Gen Hamid. But their gallantry was considered far fetched.

At about 1630 hours an air observer spotted Indian armour and infantry forming up for attack. The air observer homed our F86s on target. Our fighters repeatedly dived on Indian concentration for several minutes. When the F86s flew back every one in 21 Brigade area cheered.

40 Field was raised at Campbellpur on 8 September 1965 by Lt Col Nawab Ahmad Ashraf. The rank and file were 95 per cent reservists ; so also all the JCOs except the subedar major. The regiment was equipped with 25 pounder guns captured during the battles of Chamb and Jurian. Ashraf got the regiment on its feet in fifteen days. By 23 September the guns had been calibrated and course shooting completed. The Director Artillery, Brig D. P. O' Reilly, visited the regiment on 28 September and declared it fit for war. On night 1/2 October 40 Field replaced 12 Medium in support of 52 Brigade. On 27 November the regiment tasted blood. Capt Waheed Khawaja was forward observer with 12 Baluch. On the opposite side was a Sikh battalion. The Sikhs, an irrepressible lot, often exchanged jokes with our troops. And as is usual in such cases a sour joke led to exchange of fire. Suddenly the Sikhs opened up in unmistakable anger.

Over the previous days Waheed had been observing, piecing together enemy activities and working out profitable targets for future punishment. He ordered a regiment concentration on a group of trees. It turned out to be some sort of headquarters. 40 Field managed to fire its guns in anger.

Gen Hamid was awarded Imtiazi Sanad for his conduct of battle. An engineer naik was similarly rewarded for laying mines during enemy bombardment. His commanding officer regretted that his gallantry had not received adequate recognition. The naik smiled :—

"I am in very good company with Gen Rana and Gen Hamid".

Sulemanke (Map No. 2)

105 Brigade, supported by 32 Medium Regiment, was responsible for the defence of Sulemanke. The brigade was commanded by Brig Akbar Khan, a handsome, energetic officer with well rounded military experience. 32 Medium was commanded by Lt Col Shams-ul-Haq Qazi. 117 Mortar Battery reinforced 32 Medium Regiment.

Brig Akbar decided to capture Indian border posts at Sadiqa and Pakka, approximately 1500 yards inside Indian territory. The attack went through as per text book. The opposition was negligible. 32 Medium suffered one casualty. Radio operator of 119 Battery commander, L/Nk Adalat Khan, was killed by a mortar shell. On 9 September it was decided to capture Asaf Wala in order to eliminate the

observation tower in the village. The attack was launched at 1200 hours without preparatory bombardment and without timed programme for support of assault. The company commander of 1 Baluch was seriously wounded and the attack stalled. Lt Riaz Aii Shah, forward observer, immediately assumed command and brought the company back to safety. Riaz was recommended for Sitara-i-Jurat.

On 18 September the enemy attacked Khokar post. Forward observer Capt Fakhar Hussain Shah dealt with it with regimental concentrations. Three days after cease fire, on 25 September, at 1700 hours the Indians attacked Chaman Wala with infantry and tanks. Capt Asrar-ul-Haq greeted them with mortar and medium shells. A number of soldiers belonging to 3/9 Gurkhas and 14 Sikhs were captured.

On an afternoon about two months after cease-fire the commander artillery 11 Division was driving along a distributary towards Luliani. Near a culvert an old woman - grey, bent and wrinkled with age frantically waved at the jeep to stop. The officer drove on for a while, then on an impulse stopped and reversed. The locals were in the habit of thumbing lifts and the brigadier was rather annoyed at the interruption. He shouted at the woman, "What is the matter, ?

The women held up her two hands and pleaded

"O my son, please take this from poor little "me".

She was holding two boiled cobs of corn. They had gone stone cold. The brigadier was flustered and hastily mumbled some thanks. The woman said,

"Do not thank me my son. It is I who thank you for accepting this little thing from me".

Anti-Aircraft Artillery

Anti-Aircraft units by virtue of their role may operate, if necessary as sub-units, sections or even as single guns. However there is no justification for their commitment in complete disregard of command structure. The intimacy of leadership is an element of strength in the operational performance of any military organisation. To eliminate this element is to deprive the unit of that much strength. In 1965 war antiaircraft units were indeed scattered with almost lunatic abandon. 36 Anti-Aircraft Regiment was initially deployed as follows :—

132 Battery	-	Ravi bridge
133Battery	-	Kala Ordnance depot
134Battery	-	Chenab bridge
135 Battery	-	Jhelum bridge

29 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment was similarly scattered:—

112 Battery	-	Ravi bridge
111 Battery	-	Kharian
110 Battery	-	Chenab bridge
109 Battery	-	Jhelum bridge

In August 110 and 111 batteries moved to Chamb and came under command 4 Corps Artillery. On 6 September 111 Battery moved to Sialkot with 4 Corps Artillery. 110

Battery remained with 7 Division. On 10 September 109 Battery moved from Jhelum bridge and joined 11 Division.

19 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, a unit organic to 1 Armoured Division sent three batteries to Sialkot to join 4 Corps Artillery, which now had two batteries from two different units, 49 (SP) and 135 batteries were deployed to protect bridges on BRB and Ruhi nullah, road Kasur—Khem Karn.

6 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment and 20 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment were the only anti-aircraft units employed as such, the former at Mauripur and the latter at Sargodha air base. 13 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment was deployed as follows:—

14 Battery	- Sargodha air base
20 Battery	- Peshawar air base
33 Battery	- Sakesar air base

5 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment sent 18 Battery to Badin and 12 Battery to Korangi Creek.

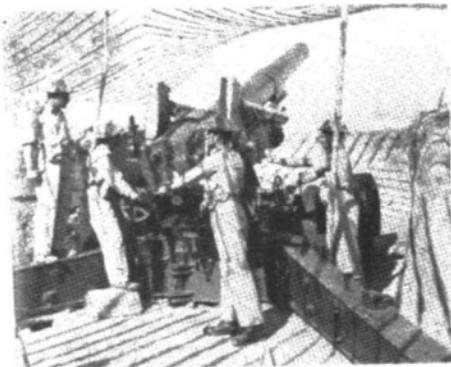
On 6 September 33 Battery, 36 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, moved from Kala to Sargodha air base and came under command 20 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. Sargodha now had five batteries from three different regiments. On 12 September 135 Battery was moved from Jhelum bridge and joined 11 Division Artillery, which formation now had four batteries from three different regiments. On 13 September 132 Battery moved from Ravi bridge to north Syphon. Admittedly some grouping was necessitated by shortage of

anti-aircraft units and some of the moves were dictated by tactical compulsions. Nevertheless the complete hodge-podge obtained by 13 September may be attributed only to lack of foresight.

Despite the disruption of command structure the performance of anti-aircraft units was commendable. In face of our anti-aircraft artillery Indian aircraft seldom pressed home their attacks with any degree of precision. Approximately thirty aircraft were shot down during the period of fighting. In terms of cost effectiveness our anti-aircraft artillery units had more than earned their keep.

The biggest score was obtained by 49 (SP) and 135 batteries deployed to protect bridges on BRB and Ruhi nullah. The Indians attacked the bridges twice a day with four aircraft ; at 1000 hours and 1600 hours. The time of engagement for anti-aircraft guns was hardly two seconds. But the combination of .50 inch quadruple and 40 millimetre guns was too much for Indian pilots. In 111 Battery, employed with 4 Corps Artillery, Maj R T H Khan and N/Sub Mohammad Akbar were awarded Sitara-i-Jurat; Hav Akbar Din and Sajawal Khan received Tamgha-i-Jurat. Units employed with 11 Division Artillery with the highest score of confirmed kills received a total of one Tamgha-i-Jurat. Hav Abdul Rehman, 135 Battery, was the lucky number. The aircraft he shot down happened to be piloted by son of Gen Carriapa, first Indian Commander-in-Chief after Independence.

At Sargodha air base the first air-raid siren went off at 0540 hours 6 September. The second raid came at 0825 hours and the third at 0930 hours. Squadron Leader Alam bagged three aircraft in one sortie. 20 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment shot down one aircraft. The Indians returned late at night.



8" Howitzer in Action



155 Gun in Action

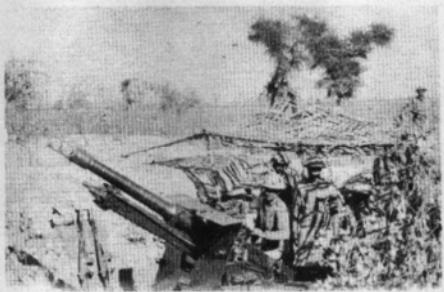


SP AA Guns (Twin) Protecting a VP



A 25 PR Gun in Action

Heavy Guns in Action





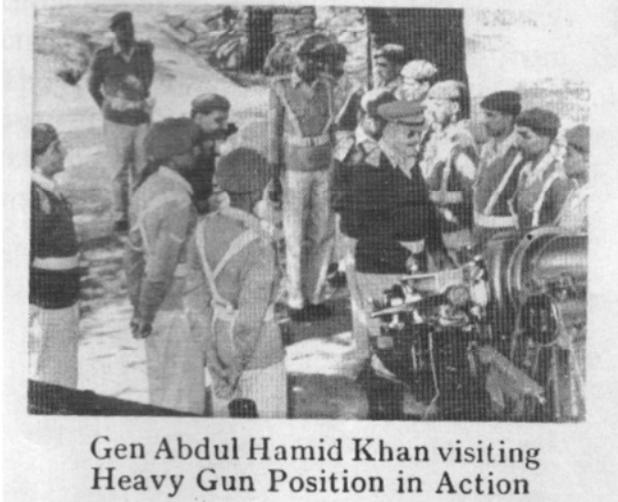
C-in-C Gen Musa Khan with
Brig Jamil Akhtar Aziz after
1965 War



'Chasing the Enemy'



C-in-C Gen Musa Khan congratulating Lt Col Bashir (12 Medium)



Gen Abdul Hamid Khan visiting Heavy Gun Position in Action

At 2330 hours four Canberras attacked Sargodha air base. Next morning at 0300 hours 7 September another flight of Canberras came over. The antiaircraft fire forced the enemy to jettison bombs away from the runway. One 500 lbs bomb landed twenty five yards from a gun of 133 Battery. A splinter hit Gunner Akhtar Badshah in the chest. Instinctively Badshah pressed his foot on the firing pedal and then passed out. He died before he reached the hospital. His parents came to claim the body. Capt Sunawar expressed condolence. The father a sixty year old veteran said, "Don't. I have three more sons in the army".

Badshah was awarded Tamgha-i-Jurat.

At Peshawar Hav Khan Afsar, 13 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, was digging gun pit on night 6 September when he saw one of our F 104 fighters catch fire as it approached the runway. The aircraft crash landed two hundred yards from the runway. The pilot, Flight Lieutenant Abbasi, could not bale out. Hav Khan Afsar regardless of personal safety rescued the pilot. Abbasi lived and Khan Afsar was awarded Tamgha-i-Basalat.

The Saw Dust Years

The pre-partition Indian officers had experienced war in North Africa, Italy and Burma, on the British side, and at squadron, battery and company levels. This experience was far removed from the blitzkriegs of Europe or from the problems they were confronted with in 1965 war. It is to be admitted that neither India nor Pakistan had the capability to stage a blitzkrieg in the style of World War II. Nevertheless a decisive concentration of combat power could have been obtained for a limited offensive within the time frame of a 17 day's war;

In 1964 the Indians acquired 130 millimetre Russian made medium guns. There was considerable commotion in General Headquarters. The Research and Development Directorate put up a paper pointing out that the 130 millimetre gun did by no means provide the total answer to the problem of artillery support for attack in modern battle. It was recommended that corps and army artillery brigades be equipped with the following weapons:—

175 millimetre (US) gun or 203 millimetre (Russian) gun
240 millimetre (Russian) mortar
122 millimetre multiple barrel rockets (US or Russian)

After 1965 war Gen Kumaramanglam, Indian Army Chief of Staff, set about collecting as many guns from Russia and Eastern Europe as he could lay his hands on. We managed to acquire a few 130 millimetre guns. But no effort was made

to organise and equip heavy artillery brigades for supporting attack.

A critical factor contributing to our success in 1965 war was the equipment and training we received under U.S. Military Aid between 1954 and 1965. Ever since the aid started India made every effort to have it stopped. Of course after the Rann of Kutch the Americans had warned us that in case of war against India the military aid would be promptly switched off. Thereafter the raising of heavy artillery brigades was relegated to academic discussions. In 1966 a high level Pakistan Army delegation visited China and accepted 85 millimetre guns for medium artillery units. The gun turned out to be a Chinese version of World War II British made 17 pounder anti-tank gun.

Between September 1965 and December 1971 fire power was seldom discussed dispassionately. In tactical discussions artillery support became a dirty expression. During this period the following artillery

units were raised :—

Field regiments	—	33
Medium regiments	—	9
Light Anti-Aircraft regiments	—	7
Heavy Anti-Aircraft regiments	—	2
120 millimetre Mortar batteries	—	8
Locating batteries	—	6
Light Anti-Aircraft batteries	—	2

The above raising entailed a hundred percent expansion in six years. Although the exercise was carried out with usual efficiency the process did indeed thin out the available experience. Furthermore the new raisings were mostly in respect of light artillery. No heavy guns, mortars or multiple

barrel rockets were obtained. No new locating regiment was raised. The balance between light, medium, heavy and locating units available before 1965 war was lost thereafter. The introduction of Russian and Chinese equipment further complicated problems of training and concentration of fire.

In keeping with our cosmetic treatment of fire power practice ammunition for artillery units was reduced to two-thirds of pre-1965 allotment. The effect of this reduction is discussed in respect of a field regiment. Taking out the allotment reserved for practising battle inoculation and divisional/corps artillery concentrations the units were left with about twenty rounds per observer; or the total allotment worked out to four rounds to train a gun number for a period of twelve months. In order to spread out the available ammunition for maximum number of shoots, fire for effect after registration of a target was given up. In regiment, division or corps concentrations, only one gun per battery was permitted to fire one round on a target. The dilution of division/corps concentrations were indeed exercises in self-delusion. They gave an altogether false impression of the effectiveness or otherwise of artillery fire.

In 1965 the Italian 105 millimetre pack howitzer was purchased. The gun was designed for movement by helicopter. The relation between the design of gun and its prime-mover was perhaps not appreciated and the gun was ordered to be stripped and carried in the body of a 2 1/2 ton vehicle. No special fittings were provided for the purpose. As neither the gun nor the vehicle were designed for such movement the practice resulted in accidents involving loss of guns, vehicles and valuable lives.

During the period 1965 to 1971 the induction of Chinese and Russian equipment emphasised the need for standardising fire control instruments. At about the same time GHQ decided to adopt the metric system of measurement and ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation) standard atmosphere for meteorological messages. This involved the following tasks:—

- a. Revision of a total of 69 publications.
- b. Recompilation of 18 firing tables.
- c. Recalculation of graphical firing tables, graphical sight tables, graphical meteorological calculators; requiring approximately 213 drawings.

In order to cope with the above work the Research and Development wing in Artillery School Nowshera was expanded and reorganised in 1969. But the work on revision of publications, instruments and firing tables was initiated immediately after the 1965 war.

The work on standardisation of sights initiated by Lt Col Muhammad Aslam 'Happy' bore fruit in 1970. The following guns fitted with sights graduated in mils were put through user trials :—

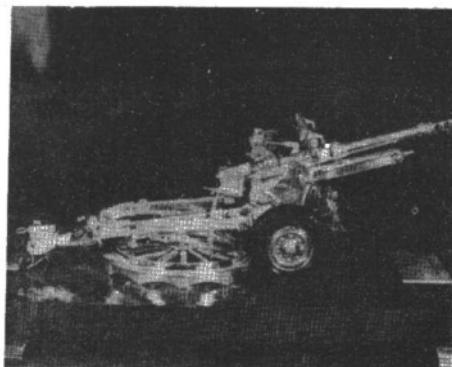
- 25 pounder gun)
- 3.7 inch howitzers) British
- 5.5 inch gun)
- 122 millimetre howitzers (Chinese)

On 8 April 1967 Gen Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan H. J ; S. Pk; Commander-in-Chief, was sworn in as first Colonel-in-Chief of Pakistan Artillery. Gen Yahya took great pride in his appointment. In his acceptance speech he said, "It has taken me thirty years to get to my true arm". Throughout his tenure as Colonel-in-Chief, Gen Yahya remained a staunch gunner.

In October 1967 Col Malik Imdad Ali Khan took over command of the Artillery Centre. A sincere and unassuming gentleman he carried the centre through a difficult period. In April 1971 the centre was reorganised for the second time. By this time the Regiment of Artillery had grown up to eighty seven units and about fifty independent batteries. The appointment of commandant was upgraded and Brig Akram Chowdhri took over the centre. Akram left for East Pakistan in July 1970 and was replaced by Brig Malik Saeed.

In General Headquarters Brig D.P.O Reilly held the appointment of Director Artillery until May 1966. Peter carried the job with devotion and earned the respect of the General Staff. During his tenure twenty six new regiments and ten independent batteries were raised. Peter was succeeded by Brig Modi Abdus Salam, an unassuming and sincere officer. Salam was followed by Brig Jamil Akhtar Aziz. 'Jimi' was a popular figure in General Headquarters and he did try to maintain some balance between light and medium artillery. In March 1970 Maj Gen Hameed Asghar Kiani was appointed as first Director General Artillery. Hameed could charm milk out of stone and did extract from General Headquarters improvements in artillery units, schools and centre which were long overdue. In July 1971 Maj Gen Khadim Hussain Raja replaced Kiani. Khadim had extensive experience of command, staff and instruction at

almost every step of the promotion ladder. But he was also a gentleman who shied away from vulgar brawls. By this time the Army was in serious trouble in East Pakistan. As we were sucked into the mire of politics we lost our bearing and were conned into a war for which we were ill prepared. The experience of artillery employment in 1965 had not been subjected to professional analysis and the 1971 war was to illustrate this failing.



Muzaffar Trophy Presented every year to the unit securing the highest marks in Laying Competition



Brig Muzaffar Presenting Trophy to Regiment of Artillery



C-in-C A. M. Yahya Khan
visiting an Artillery Unit



President of Pakistan Field
Marshal M Ayub Khan visiting
an Artillery Unit

The Winter of Discontent

(Map No. 3)

The year 1971 was heralded on a note of hope. It ended on a note of discontent. The breakdown of political talks led to the military action of March 25, civil war and eventually to war against India.

East Pakistan was carved out of the Indian provinces of Bengal and Assam, supposedly on religious grouping of population. In the final firman many unwritten desires were articulated. The net result was a boundary unencumbered by geographical features ; where roads, rails and even streets in villages were bisected by a line drawn on a map in Delhi.

East Pakistan is surrounded on three sides by Indian territory. In the south it is defined by the Bay of Bengal. The border with India measures approximately 3000 miles with a straight edge; discounting the innumerable enclaves. These vary in size from a field measuring 500 yards square to the salient of Balonia four by twenty miles, or the enclave of Titalya seven by twenty miles. Access to the enclaves is by mud tracks, mostly unfit for vehicular traffic.

Three river systems originating from India or beyond divide East Pakistan into four parts. These are :—

- a. Megna
- b. Braham Putra
- c. Ganges

The main rivers and their hundreds of tributaries fragment the land into islands and lakes. The water level varies upto fifty feet between dry and wet seasons.

Waterways are the main means of communication, because of which a newcomer is likely to drift into thinking that fighting can be confined to water-borne operations. The centres of population are on land and these provide political and tactical objectives. Land communications linking these centres, therefore, determine the pattern of operations. Nevertheless woe betide a military force which surrenders the labyrinth of waterways to the enemy.

Vehicular movement is restricted to metalled roads and dirt tracks. The latter are jeepable only during the dry season. The metalled roads are raised twenty feet or more above the surrounding fields, or thick tropical vegetation, or stagnant, bug infested stretches of green scum.

The villages are raised a few feet above the rice fields and are the only areas dry enough for deployment of guns. These are conspicuous places and easily spotted from the air. Ground observation is limited to 500 yards. Fields of fire of direct fire weapons are similarly restricted. The water table is at a depth of four feet, and weapon pits have to be built up rather than dug down, making them accordingly vulnerable. But whatever the case, rain water collects in the defences, attracting vermin, increasing the discomfort of the soldier, eating into his military stamina.

The terrain is tailor made for supporting guerilla operations. The situation of East Pakistan, the shape of its border, and the orientation of its communications make it extremely vulnerable to attack from India.

Chittagong is the main port and all rail and road traffic from Chittagong inland has to pass through the bottleneck of Feni. This river port is within mortar range of Indian territory. By destroying two bridges in Feni, all road/rail movement inland from and to Chittagong is severed. Khulna is the second port but it cannot berth large sea-going vessels. These are loaded or unloaded at Chalna anchorage about forty miles from Khulna.

The river port of Chandpur, forty miles west of Comilla, is the key to inland river traffic. At Ashuganj is the only bridge spanning Megna and at Behram-mara the only bridge over Ganges.

Dacca is the geographical and political heart of East Pakistan. But the physical capture of Dacca through surface attack is unnecessary. Indian forces have to capture only the following places to bring operations to a successful conclusion :—

- Feni
- Chandpur
- Ashuganj
- Kushtia

The defender has no choice but to disperse his forces. A successful defence is possible only through arming the mass

of the population, operating in small bands, forcing dispersion on the invader and cutting him to pieces.

The climate of East Pakistan is humid and saps the will of the new-comer. There is abundance of life and corresponding indifference towards its waste. Food is easily obtainable from the fat earth and the pregnant rivers and lakes. But there are too many mouths competing for the available subsistence. The people are innured to the enervating climate, the scanty food, scanty clothing and scanty shelter. This is their great strength in guerilla fighting. They are good Muslims and perform congregational prayers with great devotion. With equal devotion they sing and dance, perhaps to overcome the discomfort of the climate or the uncertainty of the next minute. The

East Pakistanis are a warm-hearted people, easy to love but difficult to live with. They love and hate with frightening heat.

By November 1971 our troops had been in action for eight months. Night after night, day after day they had been moving on roads which were mined and where they were frequently ambushed. For eight months they had been living in water-logged bunkers, their feet rotted by slime, their skins ravaged by vermin, their minds clogged by an incomprehensible conflict.

They were tired.

On 21 November Indian troops attacked East Pakistan, avowedly to prevent Pakistani troops trespassing into Indian territory. The attack was timed with perfect strategic foresight. There was hardly a voice raised against Indian aggression. During the preceding eight months Pakistan had lost credibility as well as sympathy.

Eastern Command had five choices :—

- a. To concentrate south of Chittagong.
- b. To concentrate around Dacca.
- c. To concentrate into division defended areas.
- d. To concentrate into brigade defended positions.
- e. To hold every inch of territory.

Eastern Command opted for course "Easy".

With the number of troops available the terrain of East Pakistan defied definition into manageable areas for formations and units. The difficulties were exacerbated through shortage of fire power, communications, and transportations. There was even a shortage of bandages in hospitals. On the eve of war Eastern Command was deployed as follows :—

- a. 14 Division. East of Megna including Sylhet, Maulvi Bazar, Brahman Baria down to Salda Nadi, the boundary with 39 Division.

- b. 39 Division was raised on 18 November and made responsible for defence of area east of Megna from Kasba - Comilla - Feni-Chittagong -Cox's Bazar-to the border with Burma. At about the same time HQ EPCAF was renamed 36 Division, which jugglery was not enough to create a combat formation out of administrative left-overs.
- c. 9 Division. West of Megna and south of Ganges including districts Faridpur, Barisal, Khulna, Jessore and Kushtia.
- d. 16 Division. North of Ganges and west of Jamuna including districts Rangpur, Bogra, Pabna, Rajshahi and Dinajpur.
- e. 96 Brigade. Mymensingh and Dacca districts.

Indian Army attacked East Pakistan with three army corps supported by approximately thirty artillery regiments and twenty (120 millimetre) mortar batteries. They were opposed by six Pakistani field regiments, four mortar batteries and one light anti-aircraft regiment.

Eastern Command had Brig Qasim as artillery commander. Qasim could do nothing more than give advice, which was ignored. When the war started the artillery headquarters in Eastern Command was packed up. The divisions were unencumbered with artillery headquarters. The manner in which guns were employed even battery headquarters were at times reduced to administrative chores.

14 Division

14 Division was responsible for defence of area East of Megna including Sylhet, Maulvi Bazar, Brahman Baria down to Salda Nadi, the boundary with 39 Division. The division had three brigades supported by 31 Field Regiment and 210 Mortar Battery. The brigades were deployed as follows :-

202 Brigade	-	Sylhet
313 Brigade	-	Maulvi Bazar
27 Brigade	-	Brahman Baria

In Sylhet 202 Brigade (Brig Salim-ullah) was responsible for defence of a hundred-mile front, from Sunamganj - Jantiapur - Sholapur ferry. 202 Brigade, like every other formation was a motley collection of regular troops, civil armed forces, police and local volunteers, equipped with German, American, British and Chinese weapons; or nothing.

Brig Salim-ullah deployed his troops along the main approaches into Sylhet

a. Akram Force consisting of:-

- (1) Company Khyber Rifles)
- (2) Company Bajaur Scouts) Sunamganj -
- (3) Company EPCAF) Sylhet axis.

This force was commanded by Lt Col Akram.

b. Riaz Force consisting of:—

- (1) One company 14 AK - Chhatak-Sylhet
- (2) 31 Punjab less two companies - Jantiapur-Sylhet.
- (3) Two companies - Karimganj-
31 Punjab - Charkhai-Sylhet.

This force was commanded by Lt Col Riaz.

c. Brigade reserve consisting of:—

- (1) One company Khyber Rifles
- (2) Two companies EPCAF

The EPCAF were either innocent adolescents or crumbling, toothless septuagenarians. Some of them remained unarmed throughout the war.

Artillery support consisted of two 6 pounder anti tank guns and 23 Battery (31 Field) equipped with 105 millimetre (Italian) pack howitzers. The guns were commanded by Maj Mehdi Hassan Chaudhry. They were deployed as follows:-

- 2x6 pounder guns - Sunamganj
- 2x 105 millimetre howitzers - Chhatak
- 2x 105 millimetre howitzers - Jantiapur
- 2x 105 millimetre howitzers - Charkhai

Capt Sarfraz and N/Sub Mohammad Siddique were with the guns in Chhatak. Lt Noor Ahmad and Sub Mohabat Hussain were in Charkhai.

All the guns of 31 Field were dotted over the landscape from Sunamganj to Kasba, a mockery of artillery practice.

Amjad was observer with 31 Punjab on Jantiapur axis. On 23 November Maj Mehdi ordered Amjad to Gunhat to deal with an expected Indian attack. The attack came at 0300 hours and was dealt with guns moved over from Jantiapur axis. On 26 November Amjad and the two guns went back to Jantiapur. In between Gunhat and Jantiapur one gun tower over-ran a mine. Fortunately the mine went off under a front wheel. The gun and ammunition were untouched.

Early morning 1 December 202 Brigade received warning of visit of General Officer Commanding Eastern Command. Brig Salim-ullah and his staff hastily prepared for operational briefing of GOC. Lt Gen Niazi landed at 1000 hours in an MI8 (Russian) helicopter, protected by a platoon of SSG, followed by two Alouettes. One Alouette carried press, radio and television free-booters. The other brought Maj Gen Qazi Majid (14 Division) and staff.

Salim-ullah, with some misgiving, invited Niazi to visit battalion command posts. The misgiving was justified. Niazi was not interested. He had come to address a public gathering. In desperation Salim-ullah called Riaz and Akram to Sylhet to brief the GOC. Gen Niazi returned from the gathering at about 1430 hours conferring 'Shera' on all and sundry. Salim-ullah again tried for operational briefing. The general made some remark about jungle fighting and took off in a swirl of dust, leaving the brigadier gasping for words.

At first light 3 December Indian aircraft attacked Jantiapur and Charkhai. This was followed by ground attack against Jantiapur and Karimganj. Own infantry fell back covered by the fire of 105 millimetre howitzers. The Indians did not press forward.

On night 3/4 December Mukti Bahioi and Indian Border Security Forces (BSF) infiltrated behind Chhatak and Gopalganj. This was not a very difficult feat considering our troops to space ratio. Brig Salim-ullah, anticipating Indian threat, withdrew the guns from Chhatak and deployed them along with guns from Charkhai. As the guns from Chhatak (Capt Sarfraz) came into action the Indians shelled them with 130 millimetre guns. The battery commander, Maj Mehdi, was on his way to Lt Noor's observation post, when he heard the shelling. At an observation post he checked with the gun position. He was informed that an Indian shell had landed near one gun. Hav Qadeer and two men of his team were instantly killed and the gun sight was destroyed. Some ammunition boxes had also been hit. Capt Sarfraz was at that time bringing the gun on centre of arc using a compass. He was missing. When Mehdi returned to the gun position he saw a jeep carrying Sarfraz's body. His stomach was torn up.

Lt Noor took over as gun position officer and N/Sub Asghar Ali went forward as observer.

313 Brigade (Brig Iftekhar Rana) was responsible for defence of area between Latu in north to river Titas in south. Artillery support consisted of 3 x 105 millimetre howitzers of 4 (Lahore) Battery and 88 Mortar Battery. In early October 210 Mortar Battery received orders to move to East Pakistan and replace 88 Mortar Battery. The advance party of 210 Mortar Battery consisting of Maj Mohammad Nawaz, Capt Altaf, N/Sub Mohammad Aslam and thirty gunners left Kharian by train on 12 October. On 17 October they attended "Walima" dinner to celebrate marriage of Capt Altaf. The officer never saw his family again. He was killed in East Pakistan. The advance party flew to Dacca on 19 October, reached Maulvi Bazar on 24th and took over equipment from 88 Mortar Battery. The mortars were deployed from Latu to Mantala. 4 (Lahore) Battery was placed under command 210 Mortar Battery. 313 Brigade Headquarters was located at Maulvi Bazar. On 28 October it moved to Madhopur where 4 (Lahore) Battery and a troop 210 Mortar Battery were deployed.

On night 27 October Maj Javed, second-in-command 30 Frontier Force, while on way to Dhaloi post was ambushed and killed. On night 28/29, Indian troops captured Dhaloi post. During the same night Maj Gen Qazi Majid along with Lt Col Yaqub (53 Field) established tactical headquarters alongside 313 Brigade at Madhopur.

On morning 29 October Lt Zamir, observer at Dhaloi, called for fire. Soon after, Zamir's wireless set was damaged

by a shell. There was no more communication from Dhaloi. At about 1100 hours some wounded soldiers trickled back. An hour later Zamir arrived along with 20 men. Dhaloi post had been captured by the enemy. Indian attack was in retaliation to our shelling of Kamalpur earlier in the month. Gen Majid requested for some reinforcements from corps in order to capture Dhaloi post. These consisted of the following:—

31 Punjab	-	Alpha company
22 Baluch	-	2 companies
EPCAF	-	1 company
Commandos	-	1 platoon (Maj Saeed)
4 Battery 31 Field	(Maj Rifat)	

Gen Majid gave out his orders at 1600 hours 29 October. Fire support was to be provided by six guns of 4 Battery, 3 guns of 47 Battery and a troop 210 Mortar Battery. The guns and mortars fired about 400 rounds. The attack failed. On 2 November Gen Niazi visited Madhopur. After some briefing about our counter attack Niazi said, "If the Indians do not vacate Dhaloi you go and capture Agartala". Thereafter he left for Dacca. The troops from corps reserve which had been loaned for attack on Dhaloi were also withdrawn.

On night 28/29 November Indians came up against our position in Munshi Ganj held by a company of 30 Frontier Force. Capt Altaf was forward observer. Another enemy force established itself on road between Shamsher Nagar

and Maulvi Bazar. The company of 30 Frontier Force at Munshi Ganj was unaware of the threat in their rear. On morning 29 November Brig Iftekhar Rana, accompanied by Maj Nawaz (210 Mortar Battery), left Maulvi Bazar to visit troops in Shamsher Nagar. A few minutes later they returned as the leading escort jeep ran into enemy fire. Nawaz volunteered to go and check enemy situation. He took two 120 millimetre mortars and deployed them short of Munshi Bazar. In the meantime some troops had withdrawn through Munshi Bazar chased by enemy shells. Nawaz asked for a platoon to hold the place. By 1750 hours a platoon from 22 Baluch reached Munshi Bazar and Nawaz set about organising defence.

During night 29/30 November Lt Zamir, forward observer, reported enemy attacks on own positions and engaged several targets. On morning 30 November Zamir called for fire on his own position. Nawaz queried the grid reference and was informed, "The Indians are all over the bloody place". A few minutes later Zamir's wireless set went dead. Zamir was called upon to surrender. He fired his sten and was cut down by enemy machine guns. The Indian commander had Zamir buried with appropriate ceremony.

In the meantime, Capt Khusro brought a company of 30 Frontier Force to reinforce the position in Munshi Bazar. On night 30 November enemy troops infiltrated Khusro's position, killing the company commander and over-running the defences. Fortunately the Indians did not advance forward of Munshi Bazar. There were no troops between

them and the mortar position. Another Indian force attacked Munshi Ganj on night 1 December. The position was held by a company of 30 Frontier Force (Maj Ehsan Qadir) and some EPCAF (Capt Siddique). Capt Altaf was the forward observer and had a troop (210 Mortar Battery) at his disposal. On 2 December Maj Ehsan and Capt Altaf went round the forward localities. They were crossing a nullah when a mortar shell landed in the vicinity. Capt Altaf was instantly killed. He was buried along with 2/Lt Shafiq Nawaz who had been killed during the previous night.

On 3 December 313 Brigade strengthened defence of Maulvi Bazar. During the next two days the position was subjected to air attacks and artillery shelling. On 6 December the brigade moved to Sherpur ferry position leaving behind 30 Frontier Force and troop (210 Mortar Battery) to delay the enemy. The second troop was deployed between Maulvi Bazar and Shamsher Nagar.

On night 6/7 December Maj Nawaz started withdrawing the mortars to Maulvi Bazar. The first two mortars were withdrawn without incident. The third mortar along with its detachment and the gun position officer, BHM Aslam, fell into a nullah. Aslam's leg was broken. The rest of the detachment escaped with a few bruises. The mortar was retrieved. But its dial sight was lost. The remaining three mortars and a 3.7 inch howitzer were withdrawn under enemy shelling. During night 8/9 December the mortars were leap-frogged back to Sherpur ferry, successfully covering the withdrawal of infantry.

On 11 December an Indian Gurkha battalion was helilanded in the tea gardens north-east of Sylhet. At about the same time 313 Brigade arrived from Maulvi Bazar along with 3 x 105 millimetre howitzers of 4 (Lahore) Battery and 6x 120 millimetre mortars of 210 Mortar Battery. Sylhet now had nine 105 millimetre howitzers and six 120 millimetre mortars. Maj Mehdi surrounded the tea gardens with three observers and let them pound the place with all their hearts. The Indians suffered about a hundred casualties due to this concentrated fire.

On night 10/11 December the bridge on Surma river was destroyed. 210 Mortar Battery was deployed in Sylhet city for all-round defence.

On 14 December Gen Niazi rang up Sylhet. He wanted two companies to be flown to Dacca to deal with Indian para brigade dropped in Tangail. Brig Iftekhar Rana (313 Brigade) had no companies to spare. Niazi haggled for one platoon and two 120 millimetre mortars. But there were no helicopters to be seen.

27 Brigade was moved from Mymensingh to Brahman Baria at the end of September 1971. It was made responsible for defence of a 40 mile front, from Titas bridge to Salda Nadi. By end November its three battalions were deployed as follows :—

12 AK	Titas bridge	-	Akhaura
12 FF	Akhaura	-	Kasba
38 Baluch	Kasba	-	Salda Nadi

The brigade was supported by nine 105 millimetre howitzers of 31 Field, two 105 millimetre howitzers from 53 Field and two 120 millimetre mortars from 210 Mortar Battery. The last named battery was committed in support of 313 Brigade operating between Ithakhola and Sylhet.

The guns in support of 27 Brigade were deployed as follows:—

- a. 1 x 105 mm howitzer Opposite Agartala ;
from 47 Battery Hav Yaqub—GPO.
- b. 3 x 105 mm howitzers)
from 47 Battery) In support of 12 FF ;
2x 105 mm howitzers) Capt Afzal—GPO.
from 4 (Lahore))
Battery)
- c. 4 x 105 mm howitzers)
from 4 (Lahore)) In support of 38 Baluch
Battery) Lt Kaisar—GPO.
2 x 105 mm howitzers)
from 53 Field)
Regiment)
- d. 2x120 mm mortars Brahman Baria ;
from 210 Mortar Capt Tahir Pasha—GPO.
Battery

31 Field Regiment had surveyed sixty gun positions out of which eight were fully prepared with overhead protection. None of these positions were occupied when the battle unfolded.

The lonely gun opposite Agartala was deployed well ahead of own forward localities so that it could shell Agartala. Hav Yaqub worked as GPO for the gun. Before 1 December Yaqub was indicated targets in the form of map references. He passed on the gun data to Hav Yasin and a shell whistled off into space. The targets were picked up by brigade or division commander from reports brought in by infantry patrols.

The remainder guns in support of 27 Brigade were served by two observation posts, deployed one at Akhaura and the other at Ganga Sagar.

On 1 December 12 Frontier Force received the first Indian attack. Hav Yasin's gun was immediately surrounded. As the enemy silhouettes broke through the morning mist the gun commander hit them with direct fire. The Indians went to ground and peppered the positions with small arms fire. Several times Hav Yasin heard Indians calling him to surrender. Each time he responded with, "Load—Fire— Ya Alt". When the Indians eventually got to the position, Hav Yasin, L/Nk Ehsan and Gunner Aziz were lying dead, their bullet splintered bodies draping the breach and trails of their gun.

The Indian commanding officer of the mountain regiment supporting their attack saluted the Pakistani gunners and buried them with appropriate military ceremony. Later he complimented the gun detachment as if they were his own men.

The guns withdrew from Akhaura early morning 6 December and deployed immediately behind Brahman Baria. On 8 December Maj Gen Maj id decided to withdraw to west of Megna. The guns of 31 Field covered the withdrawal of 27 Brigade to Ashuganj and then to Bhairab Bazar. The last to withdraw were the guns commanded by Capt Afzal. On 9 December Indian troops closed up to the east bank of Megna and the bridge was blown up on orders of the GOC. On 10 December Brig Saadullah brought in the rear elements from east of Megna, and the defence of Bhairab Bazar was hastily organised.

The Indians had taken eight days to advance twenty miles from Akhaura to Ashuganj. However their crossing of Megna was carried out with commendable despatch. Some enemy crossed the river on night 8/9 December. On 10 December the bridge-head was reinforced with heliborne troops. On 11 December they probed forward towards Bhairab Bazar. As the Indian troops closed in our guns had problems of crest clearance. Maj Khurram and Capt Afzal improvised charges so that some shells did land on target ; and the enemy was kept at bay till 16 December.

39 Division

39 Division had four brigades with which to defend area east of Megna from Salda Nadi to the border with Burma. The division had no means by which to control small unit actions spread over such a vast and complex terrain. But the time for appreciating such short comings is before the battle. The troops were deployed as follows :—

117 Brigade with direct support two batteries	Area Kasba—Comilla—Chaudagram—Lak sham—Daudkandi.
53 Field (13 guns)	Area Chaudagram—
53 Brigade with direct support one battery (5 guns)	Feni—Balonia,

91 Brigade (Brig Taskeen) with direct support one troop 120 mm mortars.	Area Ramgarh- Karer Hat Chittagong Hill Tracts, along Feni River,
97 Brigade with direct support one troop 120 mm mortars. (Brig Atta Malik)	Chittagong to Cox s Bazar and Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Even at this late stage the deployment of troops was oriented towards the remote fiction of legal sovereignty than the immediate reality of a defensive battle. Battalions were stretched over a front of twenty miles. Even companies and platoons were stretched beyond the limits of tactical control; although on the 1/250,000 situation map the positions looked neat and compact. The markings represented a force of habit acquired over years of self-deception. In keeping with the decorative deployment of troops the guns were disposed in ones and twos to furbish unit lay-outs.

53 Field Regiment was commanded by Lt Col Salim Malik, a fair, curly haired, laughing Kashmiri with the usual stamina of his tribe.

53 Brigade was moved from Chittagong to Dacca around the beginning of October. It was awarded status of theatre reserve. Maj Javed Yunus was brigade major 53 Brigade. The brigade had two battalions i.e. 15 Baluch and 39 Baluch. Its third battalion 21 AK landed in Dacca in middle of November. The battalion headquarters was moved

to Karcr Hat to act as brigade headquarters for Brig Taskeen. One company was donated to 53 Brigade, two companies to 117 Brigade and one company was sent to Chandpur as division reserve. In one week a first class battle-hardened battalion was moved from the snow capped heights of Pir Kanthi in Azad Kashmir to the hot and humid Ganges delta and scattered to the four winds.

While in Dacca as theatre reserve 53 Brigade was ordered to prepare plans for six offensive operations, seven counter penetration tasks, six counter attack tasks and six defence tasks. In middle of November the brigade was committed to clearing the islands in the Ganges and Padma rivers. On 20 November 53 Brigade was moved to Feni and occupied postions along the border from Chaudagram—Feni—Balonia. Two guns were deployed north of Feni to support 39 Baluch and three guns were positioned between Feni and Parashuram to fire around the length and breadth of Balonia salient.

The guns in Balonia were commanded by Capt Ahmed-uz-Zaman, a dedicated soldier from Sylhet. Throughout the period of civil war he never showed any doubts about his commitment. After the war Zaman preferred separation from his kinfolk than separation from his Pakistan. On 25 November Lt Col Salim called Zaman to Feni. South of Parashuram Zaman ran into machine gun fire. The previous night Indians had infiltrated behind 15 Baluch positions. A company of 15 Baluch tried to break

through the Indian positions. Capt Bajwa, forward observer, was killed but the company got through. As the defensive position disintegrated N/Sub Fazal Hussain withdrew the guns towards Feni. Zaman tracked them in a temple. Meanwhile he monitored an Indian transmission. Someone was ordering infantry to encircle the guns. Zaman made the guns ready for direct fire. As soon as the Indians got within sight they were engaged with air-burst and white phosphorous ammunition.

In the meantime Lt Col Salim allowed discretion to Zaman to either fight his way through Feni or destroy the guns. Zaman decided to fight his way through. The guns were leap-frogged, moving and firing alternatively. One gun was brought by N/Sub Fazal, the second by Lt Iqbal and the last by Zaman. They were in action in Feni airfield by 2100 hours 26 November. Feni now had five guns.

On 27 November 53 Brigade was ordered to vacate Balonia. On 28 November the Indians attacked Feni position with tanks and infantry. Two tanks were hit with artillery fire. Thereafter the Indians switched their attack against 117 Brigade.

117 Brigade was deployed as follows :—

23 Punjab with 3 guns — From Chaudagram
to Com ilia.

25 Frontier Force with — Mian Bazar —Lai
5 guns Mai—Daudkandi.

30 Punjab with 5 guns — Mian Bazar—Kasba.

On 3 December the Indians attacked 23 Punjab and poured through the gaps between company/platoon positions, it was a bit late to complain about hostility of local population. The hostility was there on 25 March and the eight months of civil war had by no means endeared us to the local population. It was a bit late to complain about the difficulties of terrain. The geography had not changed since April 1971 when we were planning to capture Agartala with a battalion and Calcutta with a brigade.

23 Punjab withdrew towards Laksham. But one company was commanded by Maj Akram with Capt Kifaitullah as artillery observer. The guns with 23 Punjab were commanded by Maj Tariq Khalil, a lithe, handsome Rajput who went through eight months of civil war without an extra crease on his trousers, or on his face.

On morning 1 December Capt Kifaitullah, observer with Alpha company 23 Punjab, reported Indian troops advancing towards his positions. Kifait gave out his fire orders and waited until enemy troops reached 800 yards short of his post. Then he engaged them with salvo after salvo. The attack broke up within 200 yards of forward localities. There were 60 Indians dead left on the scene. At 1700 hours 4 December Kifait reported enemy vehicles moving through the gap between Chaudagram and Comilla towards Laksham. At 1730 hours the Indians attacked Bravo company, who had no artillery observer. The battalion commander, Lt Col Ashfaque, relayed orders between Bravo company and the guns. After about half an hour the

battalion headquarters itself got involved and lost touch with forward troops. At 2000 hours Kifait reported enemy troops operating behind Alpha company position. Maj Zafar, second-in-command 23 Punjab, spoke to Maj Akram (Alpha) and ordered him to exfiltrate. Kifait talked to the GPO, Capt Naseem, and worked out a plan for extricating Akram's company. The guns would fire in rear of company position. The company ran into the enemy nevertheless. There was considerable confusion. Kifait kept on shifting fire as best as he could. Meanwhile the Indians were moving towards the gun position. Naseem shifted to alternative position as bullets ricochetted off trees. By 0130 hours 5 December the guns were deployed in Phulgaon. There was no communication with the observer. At 0230 hours Kifait reported his position between Chaudagram and bridge on river little Feni. At 0500 hours Kifait called for fire. Naseem objected that the grid reference was the same as OP location. Kifait said, "OK. This is the only way I can get out. Bloody well fire". Naseem fired and swept the area 200 yards either side. Thereafter the GPO warned the observer that the guns were in danger of being over-run and they would have to move to Laksham. At the end of the shoot there was no reply from Kifait. Five minutes later the Kifait's signaller responded to Naseem's persistent calls, "Saab shaheed ho giya". Kifait died in the best tradition of artillery observers, engaging the enemy as long as he could breathe.

At 0530 hours Naseem ordered his guns to cease-fire and move to Laksham. At 0730 hours, as they approached the railway station, they were attacked by hostile aircraft. Naseem dispersed the convoy. The guns were untouched. At

0900 hours the guns reported "Ready" at Laksham. Here they joined those who had come from Balonia and Feni. Maj Tariq Khalil sent Naseem as observer and Capt Shahid took over as GPO.

On evening 4 December when 53 Brigade was engaged in a running fight as it was ordered to withdraw to Laksham, as soon as possible, and also to despatch two companies to Comilla. During night 4/5 December a company each from 21 AK and 39 Baluch were despatched to Comilla. They were detrained in Laksham. The Indians had already severed communications between 53 and 117 Brigades.

At 1000 hours 5 December Maj Javed Yunus arrived at Laksham railway station with advance party of 53 Brigade headquarters. He located the commanding officer 23 Punjab, Lt Col Ashfaque, to get oriented about the situation in Laksham. The colonel informed Yunus that his battalion was reduced to 90 men. With these 90 men and the two companies meant for Comilla he had organised defence of Laksham. When the division commander was informed about the situation he immediately ordered counter-attack by 117 Brigade to restore the division front, By evening 5 December, 39 Baluch and 15 Baluch arrived in Laksham. On the way from Feni Maj Javed Yunus had collected two company worth of stragglers belonging to 23 Punjab. By 6 morning Laksham was in reasonable shape for defence. Indian attacks developed during the day and were punished with artillery fire. The gun positions, under Maj Tariq and Capt Zaman, were prepared with ingenuity, in the face of enemy air and ground superiority, and with the knowledge that there would be no replacements. The gun pits were built

up and camouflaged to look like local huts. Throughout the next ten days Indian aircraft attacked the positions repeatedly. Not a single gun was hit.

Meanwhile Maj Yunus anticipated Indian moves and struck out at suspected concentrations with all nine guns. The fire inflicted some casualties and sobered the enemy. It gave our troops something to talk about. On 6 December an Indian helicopter hovered a short distance from own positions and started adjusting artillery fire on Lak ham. Maj Tariq ordered all nine guns to lay on the helicopter and engage with air-burst. The helicopter was reportedly hit in the fourth salvo and a cheer went up from gun detachments.

On 7 December 39 Division got into serious trouble. The Indians had captured Lai Mai, MudarTarganj and Haji Ganj—only 15 miles short of Chandpur. Command and control between division, brigades, battalions, deteriorated to wireless messages totally out of context with reality. On 8 December 53 Brigade tried to capture Mudaffarganj. The attempt was a costly failure. On 9 December Eastern Command ordered the brigade to exfiltrate to Comilla. They exfiltrated at 2200 hours night 9/10 December. On morning 11 December remnants of the brigade trickled into Comilla cantonment. Here 53 and 117 Brigades set up defence and remained in position until 15 December.

53 Brigade moved from Chittagong to Dacca by beginning October. Thereafter the troops in Chittagong area were grouped under 91 (Independent) Brigade. These consisted of following:—

14 Frontier Force	Transferred from 53 Brigade
2 Commando Battalion	(Less company)
West Pakistan Rangers	One wing
EPCAF	One wing
Mujahids	Two battalions
Marines	One battalion
171 Mortar Battery	Two troops of 4x 120 mm mortars
Engineers	One company

The raising of 88 Mujahid Battalion is illustrative of the character of these units. In July 1971 an officer was flown from West Pakistan to Dacca. The order said, "Report to Eastern Command forthwith". In Dacca he waited a fortnight before he was ordered to report to 53 Brigade in Feni. Here he was ordered to raise a Mujahid battalion. The brigade major advised him to get hold of some loyal elements. These were the Biharis who had migrated from India in 1947. Their recruitment alienated them from the very people who had given them shelter for twenty five years. The battalion was equipped with rifles appropriated from the police. They were given some rudimentary training which did not include firing. Soon after, they were committed to operations. Some of them made up for their lack of skill through total commitment to our side in the knowledge that they had no home outside Pakistan. Some did not. Some were butchered like animals.

Towards the end of July Brig Atta Malik was posted from West Pakistan to Martial Law Headquarters Dacca as Brigadier Civil Affairs. In September 1971 he was ordered to Chittagong and raised 91 (Independent) Brigade. On the raising of 39 Division, 91 Brigade was transferred to Brig Taskeen and Atta raised 97 Brigade. The front along east of Feni including Ramgarh and Karer Hat was allotted to Taskeen. Atta was made responsible for operations in Chittagong hill tracts. The two brigades had following troops

91 Brigade (Brig Taskeen)	97 Brigade (Brig Atta Malik)
24 FF (2 companies)	24 FF (Less 2 companies)
EPCAF - 1 wing	48 Baluch
Rangers - 1 battalion	2 commando (Less company)
Mujahids - 1 battalion	EPCAF - 1 wing
171 Mortar Battery (Less troop)	Marine battalion Troop (171 Mortar Battery)

On 12 November Indians attacked Jalenpara post in Chittagong hill tracts. Thereafter they advanced towards Moratia, Rangipara and Khagra Chari. With the force at his disposal, Atta concentrated defence around Rangipara and Khagra Chari. The Indians occupied Moratia with great fanfare and without opposition. Thereafter they were halted. Atta used his 3 inch and 120 millimetre mortars with maximum effect. On 6 December Atta was ordered to withdraw to Chittagong. He appreciated the disastrous consequences of unhinging troops in the face of a superior enemy and under the existing circumstances. He decided to

continue to fight in hill tracts, sparing some troops for Chittagong. The Indian division coming through the hill tracts never got past Moratia, and 97 Brigade kept their pride.

One troop of 171 Mortar Battery at Karer Hat was commanded by Capt Iftikhar. The second troop was in Ramgarh commanded by Capt Anwar. On 4 December two mortars were transferred from 91 Brigade to 97 Brigade. On evening 28 November Iftikhar was ordered to go to 53 Brigade to support 15 Baluch in Balonia. He reached Delta company by midnight. The company was commanded by Maj Shujaat. On 6 December 53 Brigade vacated Feni and Iftikhar was ordered to go back to 97 Brigade at Dhoom Ohat bridge. On 8 December Brig Taskeen ordered demolition of the bridge. It took three tries before the bridge crumbled. Thereafter Iftikhar joined Delta company (24 Frontier Force) deployed near Faujdar Hat Cadet College. On 14 December at 0230 hours Iftikhar spotted enemy gun flashes. Carefully he took a series of compass bearings, worked out the distance by conversion of time from flash to sound, and ploughed up the area with salvos of long range ammunition. The effectiveness of mortar fire was witnessed by the enemy.

The troops in Ramgarh were ordered to withdraw towards Hat-Hazari at 1800 hours 7 December. On the way down they were ambushed. Capt Anwar managed to get his mortars into Hat-Hazari by 0900 hours 8 December and here they stayed till 17 December.

9 Division

9 Division was responsible for defence of area west of river Megna and south of Ganges, including the districts of Faridpur, Barisal, Khulna, Jessore and Kushtia. The border with India measured two hundred miles with a straight edge. 9 Division consisted of the following troops:—

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 57 Brigade | — In direct support
49 Field Regiment. |
| 107 Brigade | — In direct support
55 Field Regiment
211 Mortar Battery. |
| 6 Punjab | |
| 12 Punjab | |
| 15 Frontier Force | |
| 22 Frontier Force | |
| 38 Frontier Force | |
| 3 Independent Armoured Squadron | |

On 29 November an ad-hoc brigade was set up under Col K. K. Afridi (Colonel Staff 9 Division). Afridi was given 38 Frontier Force, 50 Punjab, two 105 millimetre howitzers and four 120 millimetre mortars. 9 Division was commanded by Maj Gen M. H. Ansari. a competent gunner with commendable combat record in World War II and 1965 war.

55 Field was located in Kharian in 1969. It was raised on 30 November 1965 and equipped with Chinese 122

millimetre howitzers. In September 1969 the regiment received warning order for move to Jessore to replace 24 Field. The latter unit was equipped with 105 millimetre Italian pack howitzers. 55 Field completed its move in October 1970 and by November handing/taking over had been completed. The move of 24 Field to West Pakistan was not carried out till July 1971. In the meantime the regiment, without its guns, were loose shunted between Khulna and Dacca to carry out tasks which are neither near nor dear to artillerymen.

107 Brigade was commanded by Brig Hayat, a tough Yusafzai Pathan with the fighting instincts of his tribe honed to razor edge through twenty five years of professional soldiering. And for a hard bitten soldier he was surprisingly human. During October Hayat had a difference of opinion about the priority of Indian objectives in case of war. Eastern Command appreciated that Satkhira and Pragpur were the most likely objectives. In June 1971 the then division commander had appreciated that Indian attack would be directed against Chaugacha, Darsana and Behramara. He was over-ruled. Hayat had recommended occupation of position for defence of Chaugacha. Eastern Command ordered deployment in Satkhira, about 50 miles south of Chaugacha. 55 field Regiment, less battery, was accordingly deployed in this area. Fifteen days' ammunition was also dumped.

On 20 November at about 1100 hours Lt Col Sharif (55 Field) was informed by Brig Hayat that the Indians had attacked Chaugacha. 38 Frontier Force and battery 55 Field

were despatched to halt enemy advance. On reaching Chaugacha the battery commander was informed that the Indians had captured Dingal Singha and Gharibpur. Brig Hayat got together a scratch force and attacked Dingal Singha. The Indians were surprised at the speed of reaction and accuracy of artillery fire. Lt Col Sharif had ordered his observers to hit only those targets which they could see to hit. The Indians retreated to west of Kobadak river. Hayat went a step further. He attacked Indian border outpost at Masalia with a company of 22 Frontier Force and a company of 38 Frontier Force.

The Indian positions had been fixed during the preceding months of fire fights. The artillery fire was accurate enough to neutralize Indian bunkers but not heavy enough to destroy them. As supporting artillery fire lifted to depth positions the Indian machine guns came to life. The two infantry companies charged forward led by their officers. Maj Anis (38 F F) was killed and Maj Bokhari (22 F F) was seriously wounded. The Indian General Officer Commanding 9 Division, Maj Gen Dilber Singh, buried Anis with full military honours and offered 'Fateha'. It was an act of recognition of one good soldier by another.

At about 1200 hours Brig Hayat visited Maj Gen Ansari in Jessore. A civilian crowd was shouting slogans in front of 9 Division Headquarters. Lt Gen Niazi had arrived from Dacca to address a public meeting. Afterwards Hayat discussed the battle situation with the two generals. Hayat represented that the brigade should be concentrated around

Jessore instead of being dispersed over Satkhira and Jibon Nagar. Before getting into the helicopter, Niazi shouted at Hayat, "Shera, I am releasing Eastern Command armour reserve to you". The reserve consisted of a total of two tanks which never made Jessore. On way back to his headquarters Hayat told his GSO-3 Capt Hafiz, We are getting 6 Punjab less two companies, 21 Punjab less two companies and complete 12 Punjab". The same evening 12 Punjab was flown from Dacca to Jessore.

Lt Col Sharif (55 Field) detailed Capt Maabud Chaudhri (East Pakistani) to accompany 12 Punjab. The battalion commander looked upon the captain with ill concealed suspicion. Two days later Maabud was the favourite son.

Hayat set up a second attack against Masalia He was given the division reserve i.e. 6 Punjab and squadron of tanks. Artillery support consisted of six 105 millimetre howitzers and four 120 millimetre mortars, the commanding officer of 6 Punjab requested time for reconnaissance and preparation. Maj Gen Ansari visited Hayat and allowed postponement of attack until preparations were completed.

Hayat and Hafiz reached Chaugacha at 1400 hours. There were some tanks moving in the distance. When they were at about 1500 yards Hafiz said, "They are Indians". Later during the day Hayat received orders to pull out of Chaugacha and take up positions at Afra where a small nullah provided some tactical advantage. The positions on Afra nullah were stretched to cope with enemy out-flanking threats, but the range of guns could not be stretched. Once again the conflict between concentration of fire and likely enemy threat led to dispersion of guns. The guns in Satkhira

and Benapole Were not permitted to move north as Eastern Command locked its mind on proprietary rights. Fortunately as pressure increased on Afra position it was reinforced with 12 Punjab and a battery 55 Field.

Lt Akrama completed his Artillery Basic Course on 19 November and flew to Dacca on 20 November. He requested for ten days' casual leave. His parents were anxious to get him married before being swallowed by the chaos of war. Lt Col Sharif gave the necessary leave and the permission for marriage. On 24 November Akrama received a signal to report to 55 Field "Forthwith". The father saw Khawaja Khair-ud-Din who saw Maj Gen Farman and the departure was delayed for forty-eight hours. Akrama got married on 25 November and reported to Eastern Command on 26 November for flight to Jessore. On 30 November he managed a seat in a Beaver. Jessore airfield was being shelled by Indian 130 millimetre guns as the Beaver landed. On 1 December the lieutenant reported to Maj Talat Imtiaz and was detailed as observer with 12 Punjab.

On 3 December troops in Eastern Command learned about declaration of war. On 4 December at 0900 hours Indian aircraft attacked targets in Chaugacha and Jessore. Particular attention was paid to gun positions, but thanks to pains taken by gun position officers in siting and camouflaging guns, there was no damage. On 5 December Alpha company (12 Punjab) was attacked. There was some heavy preparatory bombardment. Enemy attack was aimed at cutting off the entire position of 107 Brigade. Alpha company position was lost but the attackers could not proceed further.

On 6 December a section of guns was ordered to support 50 Punjab and 38 Frontier Force group at north Kaliganj, 15 miles north of Jessore. The group was commanded by Col K. K. Afridi. As 50 Punjab position disintegrated the section of guns was attacked by hostile infantry. Lt Maqbool, the GPO, got wounded but he ordered direct fire and the enemy was held at bay. The Indians admitted that attacking gun positions was not exactly a fun fair.

At 1600 hours on 6 December the enemy over-ran right flank of 6 Punjab. There were wild rumours about large number of enemy tanks and APCs moving towards the gun - position. The GPO refused to panic and covered the withdrawal of 6 Punjab.

At 1300 hours Brig Baqir Siddiqui, Chief of Staff Eastern Command, spoke to Brig Hayat about withdrawal of 107 Brigade to Khulna. Apparently the proposal was not cleared with GOC 9 Division. At 1600 hours Lt Col Sharif was informed that Eastern Command had ordered withdrawal of 107 Brigade to Khulna.

At 1605 hours Brig Hayat received news that enemy armour had broken through 6 Punjab and was racing towards Jessore. Thereupon the battalion was ordered to withdraw towards Khulna. Lt Col Sharif ordered 201 Battery to leap-frog back to Jessore so as to support withdrawal of 6 Punjab. Sharif then contacted Brig Hayat at Nawapara and the two officers

decided to set up delaying position at 'Y' junction road Satkhira-Jessore-Khulna. 15 Frontier Force and 200 Battery were ordered to withdraw from Satkhira and join the brigade.

At 0330 hours 7 December Sharif and Shams (22 F F) arrived at 'Y' junction to organise the delaying position. Shortly afterwards 201 Battery (Maj Azmat Hayat) arrived and was put in direct support of 22 Frontier Force. By 0900 hours most of 107 Brigade and all batteries of 55 Field were deployed in the delaying position. Brig Hayat went round the forward positions and his confident smile cheered up the troops.

At 0900 hours 7 December Indian tanks attacked 22 Frontier Force. The enemy was held up till mid-day 8 December. At that time Indian tanks overran R & S platoon on left flank of the battalion and headed for 120 millimetre mortar troop position (211 Mortar Battery). The GPO Capt Daryafat ordered engagement of tanks with indirect fire. The gunners were not bloody fools. They knew that mortars have no business trading shots with tanks. They also knew that artillerymen stay with their guns irrespective of odds. The gunners continued to fire until they were shot to pieces. The tanks then headed for Azmat's battery. Azmat was in battalion headquarters when he heard the Indian tanks overrunning R & S platoon. He got into his jeep and started for the gun

position. His path was blocked by two Indian tanks. Azmat was called upon to surrender and he responded with firing his carbine. Next moment a tank shell blew up the jeep.

Brig Hayat and Geh Ansari recommended Azmat for Nishan-i-Haider. Maj Azmat Hayat had come to East Pakistan as ADC to Maj Gen Shaukat Riza. In June 1971 he was posted to 55 Field as battery commander. He was a straight-forward character who wore his likes and dislikes on the end of his sleeve. During operations he took every conceivable risk, perhaps to prove that the ADC thing had not affected his artillery breeding. Azmat was killed on 8 December. His wife had given birth to another gunner on 2 December.

After the penetration of *Y' junction the infantry battalions withdrew to Nawapara. The withdrawal was covered by 55 Field. The guns were withdrawn in good order and with all their honour. On 9 December 107 Brigade withdrew to Khulna. By evening 9 December 55 Field was deployed and ready to support this position.

In Khulna one company 15 Frontier Force and one from 21 Punjab (R & S) were deployed in screen position 2000 yards ahead of main position. 9 (Indian) Division contacted the screen position on morning 11 December. There was a hard fought battle for about thirty-six hours before the position was over-run on night 12/13 December. The battle

for

Khulna

started on 14 December. An Indian helicopter appeared on the scene and started directing fire on 55 Field gun position. The helicopter was engaged with 12.7 millimetre anti-aircraft machine guns. It limped back with the observer fatally Wounded ; so it was reported.

55 Field was opposed by five Indian artillery regiments. Nevertheless the Khulna position held out until the cease-fire. It gave both sides something to talk about. The fighting in Khulna continued till 0900 hours on 17 December. When the firing stopped Lt Col Sharif asked Brig Hayat, "We are not surrendering our guns. Have I your permission to dump them into the river" ? Hayat said, "Good man. Do not let the enemy touch them". Some days later the Indians recovered two guns from the river.

57 Brigade was responsible for area from Mahesh-pur to Behramara. It consisted of : —

18 Punjab

29 Baluch

In direct support 49 Field Regiment

Troop 120 millimetre mortars (211 Mortar Battery)

49 Field was raised at Rawalpindi in October 1965. The regiment was equipped with 25 pounder guns. Within a week after raising it moved into Kotli

as part of 12 Division Artillery. It moved to Sialkot in October 1968. In July 1971 the regiment received orders to move to East Pakistan "Forthwith". It had to move without guns, wireless sets or vehicles, even without small arms. As an after-thought each battery was issued with ten rifles and two machine guns.

49 Field travelled West to East by sea and arrived in Khulna by mid-August. From Khulna to Kushtia it was ferried by the none too certain rail service. It was ordered to pick up some vintage 3.7 inch howitzers from 24 Field and of course get ready for operations forthwith. The equipment was far from complete, and the officers and men of 49 Field ran around improvising, or appropriating whatever was needed to get ready "Forthwith". The vehicles were ferried across from Chittagong. All the vehicles meant for 9 and 16 Divisions had been unloaded in this place in the vain hope that the road inland would be quickly opened. Most of these vehicles were still in Chittagong on 16 December 1971.

Lt Col Akram Moghul, a well-qualified professional,' was exactly the type of commanding officer to get things going without fuss or fan-fare. Within a fortnight after its arrival the unit was ready for action.

West of Darsana 18 Punjab was supported by 146 Battery 49 Field, equipped with 6x3.7 inch howitzers. The battery was commanded by Maj Fazal Hussain. At 0730 hours 24

November Fazal was in battalion headquarters when he heard sounds of artillery shelling. He contacted forward observer Capt Barkat. There was no response. Barkat's jeep had been hit. The second observer Capt Shah Nawaz informed that enemy infantry were attacking their position and there were no friendly troops in the area. In the meantime Lt Col Moghul arrived in battalion headquarters and ordered withdrawal of observers. Maj Fazal raced towards the gun position.

On night 29/30 November the enemy attacked company 18 Punjab at Uthali. N/Sub Lehrasab became aware of enemy infantry when they were barely 300 yards away. In spite of the risk of close fire with ancient uncalibrated 3.7 inch howitzers, Lehrasab engaged with air-burst. Some of the splinters ricochetted off the nearby trees.

On 30 November, 18 Punjab with 178 and 179 batteries 49 Field and 211 Mortar Battery established defence in Hijalgarhi. On 3 December one gun returning from Jhaneda after repairs was hit by enemy tanks. The entire detachment was killed. Brig Manzur ordered attack towards suspected enemy position. H-hour was set at 0400 hours 5 December. Prior to the attack some targets were picked off the map and engaged with sporadic fire. The attack was called off some time before H-hour. It was decided to move the brigade to Kushtia.

On night 6/7 December, 178 and 179 batteries and

211 Mortar Battery leap-frogged towards Kushtia. By 1600 hours 7 December guns and mortars were in action in Kushtia where they joined 146 Battery. At mid-day 9 December Indian tanks and infantry attacked along road Jhaneda-Kushtia. Two guns of 178 Battery which were deployed ahead of main position were over-run by Indian tanks. At 1400 hours Maj Fazal and Lt Col Moghul went towards Jhaneda to check 18 Punjab position. About 800 yards ahead of own gun position they were fired at by an enemy tank. Fazal ordered a RR crew to engage the tank. The tank was hit on one of its tracks and slithered off the road. Capt Ashfaque, 178 Battery commander, joined Fazal. Some tanks appeared in front of the gun position and three were knocked out with direct fire. Fifteen Indian soldiers were made prisoners.

After the battle at Kushtia, Eastern Command ordered 57 Brigade to cross Ganges and join 16 Division. There was little merit in the order. It unhinged 57 Brigade and even if the move had been carried out in good order there was nothing that 57 Brigade could do in 16 Division area which it could not do better in an area where it had been operating since April 1971. In the event, the brigade disintegrated.

On 11 December while 49 Field was trying to get the guns across Paksy bridge some Indian aircraft struck at it. The bridge had been prepared for demolition and the charges were set off, not at a time of our own choosing. Two spans fell into the river carrying one gun with its detachment and

two JCOs. Lt Col Akram Moghul rushed to the gaping void and saw a havildar hanging to a rail. He was rescued.

Maj Asif, battery commander 146 Battery, had ordered Lt Naseem Javed to deploy two guns to cover the crossing of 57 Brigade. The lieutenant kept his guns firing until the bridge was destroyed. Thereafter he and the gun detachments crossed the river in a ferry.

On 15 December Capt Mumtaz was observer with an SSG company deployed west of Faridpur. The company was commanded by Capt Asaf. At about 1000 hours Mumtaz saw three Indian PT76 tanks at a distance of 2000 yards emerging from a mango grove. The tanks were firing all their weapons in speculative fire. Most of the rounds went high. Mumtaz had the fires of an ad-hoc battery at his disposal. The battery consisted of 2 x 105 millimetre howitzers from 55 Field, 2 x 3.7 inch howitzers from 49 Field and 2x120 millimetre mortars from 211 Mortar Battery. The first salvo was near enough and the observer ordered 6 rounds gun fire, followed by 5 rounds gun fire. The tanks reappeared at 1600 hours. When Mumtaz called for fire, only 2x 105 millimetre howitzers responded. The 3.7 inch howitzers and 120 millimetre mortars had been attacked by tanks.. Lt Niazi, GPO 3.7 inch howitzers, engaged the tanks with direct fire but both the guns and mortars were over-run.

Meanwhile Mumtaz had his own problems. Indian tanks advanced through the fire of 2 x 105 millimetre howitzers. They were about 800 yards from the observation post when a tank shell hit the signaller (L/Nk Nazir) in the right hip. The leg flew off and Nazir died with a surprised 'Oh'. Capt Asaf sent two men armed with a 40 millimetre Chinese rocket launcher. They were shot down by machine guns. The tanks stopped at 400 yards from the company position and using loud-speakers called for surrender. It was getting dark and Asaf and Mumtaz decided to lead the men through the gauntlet. About half of them were killed, including Mumtaz's technical assistant, Mehmood. By morning 16 December the exhausted remnants hopefully crawled into Faridpur. The place was crawling with Indian troops.

16 Division

16 Division was responsible for area north of Ganges and west of Jamuna. The border with India measured over 500 miles. 16 Division consisted of the following : -

- a. 34 Brigade - Rajshahi-Pabna.
with in direct support
117 Mortar Battery consisting of three troops each of 4x120 mm mortars.

- b. 205 Brigade — Dagaon-Hilli-
with in direct support Phulbari.
80 Field Regiment.
- c. 23 Brigade — Dinajpur-Rangpur.
with in direct support
48 Field Regiment.

34 Brigade was commanded by Brig Mir Abdul Naeem, a highly competent and courageous officer. Naeem had arrived in East Pakistan as colonel staff 9 Division. He was due to be promoted and transferred. But he preferred to accompany the division to East Pakistan. His promotion was consequently delayed for three months. In July 1971 he said farewell to 9 Division, crossed over to Rajshahi and assumed command of 34 Brigade. As colonel staff he was a pillar of strength in 9 Division. He ran an efficient and happy headquarters.

23 Brigade was responsible for Dinajpur-Rangpur area north of Phulbari-Pirganj. On 21 November Naeem was ordered to assume command of troops in Rangpur east of railway line Chilhati-Phulbari from 23 Brigade. Naeem took over command of the following troops :—

- 8 Punjab
- 25 Punjab (Two companies)
- 26 FF (One company)

48 Field Regiment was raised on 5 October 1965 at Sangjani, seven miles north of Rawalpindi. The

regiment was commanded by Lt Col Ghulam Sarwar. About a month later the unit moved into Azad Kashmir. In May 1968 it relieved 11 Field in Sialkot. In August 1970 the unit received warning order to relieve 23 Field in East Pakistan during March 1971. The move was postponed a number of times. On 3 October it moved by train to Karachi and on 13 October the first group was flown to Dacca. By the same evening it started relieving 23 Field. The exercise was carried out with quiet efficiency.

In order to cope with the fire support requirements of two brigades, 48 Field Regiment was scissored into six sub-units:—

- a. Three batteries — 4 guns each
- b. Two batteries — 2 guns each
- c. One battery — 2 guns (held in reserve)

In October two guns commanded by Capt Abdul Ghafoor were despatched to support a company of 25 Punjab at Branga Mari, north of Lai Munir Hat. The area is be-devilled with tropical vegetation, vermin and water courses. In the last week of October Capt Ghafoor was posted out and 2/Lt Nawaz took up support of 25 Punjab. Nawaz had been commissioned in March 1970. At the observation post Nawaz carried out his assignment with the keenness of a fresh graduate from Artillery School. Two weeks later his education was put to test.

On night 13/14 November an Indian battalion attacked the company of 25 Punjab. Nawaz fired away at

pre-selected targets adjusting fire as the Indians moved. The gun position officer, N/Sub Shafique, sensed the urgency and responded like a seasoned hand. Firing continued throughout the night. The company commander, Capt Atta, was killed. In the meantime N/Sub Shafique reported he was running short of ammunition. The adjutant, Capt Ayub, ordered the guns to be withdrawn to Nageshwari, 13 miles towards the rear. At 0900 hours Brig Ansari (23 Brigade) flew into Nageshwari bringing some ammunition for the guns. Nawaz and his party stayed in the observation post with no friendly troops around. At 1500 hours he was ordered to join the guns in Nageshwari. On the way back the observer and his party were ambushed, wounded and taken prisoner. Nawaz was recommended for Sitara-i-Jurat.

Eastern Command ordered 23 Brigade to recapture the lost position. Brig Ansari nominated Lt Col Sarfraz Malik for the assignment. The following troops were made available :—

8 Punjab	—	2 Companies
25 Punjab	—	2
Companies Mujahids		—
1 Battalion		

Artillery support was to be provided by N/Sub Shafique's two 105 millimetre howitzers. Shafique was assisted by N/Sub Inayat. Capt Naseer accompanied the attacking troops as forward observer. He had landed at Dacca at 0900 hours 16 November after completion of a gunnery course at Nowshera. In Dacca he thumbed a ride in a helicopter and

joined Lt Col Sarfraz at mid-day. The attacking force advanced a few hundred yards and then froze.

On 20 November Indian troops probed across the border. Naseer had anticipated Indian action and his prompt reaction prevented any major enemy headway. Six days later on night 26/27 Brig Varma ordered 4 Rajputs to by-pass Sarfraz force position and eliminate N/Sub Shafique's guns.

At 2300 hours the gun position was subjected to mortar and small arms fire. Enemy troops came round the flank of Sarfraz Force and attacked the guns from two directions. Shafique heard bullets whistling overhead. Immediately he shouted, "Section Target Ten Rounds Gun Fire". He was acknowledged by a heart-warming shout by the gun commanders. A few seconds later the scene was lit up by the muzzle flashes of the guns. There were twin cracks followed by twin explosions. The firing went on till 0400 hours 27 November. A total of 280 rounds were fired. During the action the command post was hit by enemy's hand grenades. Hav Zaman, L/Hav Qamar, TA Allah Ditta and Driver Abdul Rehman were killed. At 0900 hours 2/Lt Athar Ali Shah (8 Punjab) took a patrol over the area where Indians had attacked. There were eighty dead bodies on the scene. The JCO and NCOs were deservedly recommended for gallantry awards. The Indians accused Shafique of mutilating the dead. Direct fire from an artillery piece does not make a pretty picture of human anatomy.

On 29 November 71 the guns were withdrawn towards the rear. On the way down they were fired upon. No one got hurt except NK. Amir driving a gun towing vehicle. Amir was hit in the chest by a bullet. Fortunately it was a flesh wound and Amir kept his nerve. When the guns reached the new position N/Sub Shafique saw Amir's blood soaked shirt and wondered what had kept the naik going. Amir was promptly evacuated to Dacca. The second gun tower was disabled by a shell splinter in the radiator. The gun was towed by the observer's jeep.

On 30 November the two guns were deployed in Kurigram. On 4 December they were loaded on a train and taken to support position on Tista river line. On 6 December Capt Naseer was ordered to take the guns in support of Lt Col Sarfraz to rescue Maj Gen Nazar Hussain Shah and Brig Tajammal. The officers had been ambushed on road Bogra-Rangpur. A tank shell had blown up the pilot jeep. The second shot had missed Gen Nazar's jeep enabling the occupants to escape.

Sarfraz Force consisted of a battalion of Mujahids and a company of 32 Baluch. On night 6/7 December this force linked up with troops despatched from Bogra. Brig Tajammal reached his headquarters the same night and ordered Lt Col Sultan (32 Baluch) to dislodge the enemy from the road.

Sultan took Naseer as forward observer and led the assault. There was little information about enemy dispositions except disconnected rumours; which spurred Sultan to test their

authenticity with characteristic boldness. The force ran into some T55 tanks deployed for parameter defence. Naseer ordered gun fire and under its cover Sultan led the charge. He was cut down by machine gun fire. Thereafter Naseer covered the withdrawal of 32 Baluch.

177 Battery 48 Field Regiment was deployed in support of 26 Frontier Force round Dinajpur as follows :—

South edge of Dinajpur	— 2 guns
West edge of Dinajpur	— 2 guns
Phulbari	— 2 guns

On 21 November Capt Anwar Alam was observer near Ramsagar Lake with a company of 26 Frontier Force. The company was commanded by Maj Nasir. Anwar arrived in Ramsagar by train and was greeted by Maj Nasir. The two officers had served together in Sialkot. Nasir told Alam that the Indians were trying to cut railway line Dinajpur-Biral. When Alam reached the observation post he could not see much and started to get up. Nasir pulled him back, "There is no need to get killed. I need you". Alam found a vantage point sheltered by trees and started engaging suspected enemy positions. The first salvo provoked automatic fire. Alam ordered "Drop 400".

The automatic fire stopped. Nasir and Alam took out a patrol to check the source of trouble. After about half an hour they were shot at with mortars and machine guns. An NCO was killed with bullets in the chest. Alam searched the area with binoculars and saw some smoke emerging from

behind a mound. Immediately he started ranging with a single gun. The first ranging round landed left of target. But where the round landed some enemy soldiers were flushed out. The fourth round landed on target and Alam ordered gun fire. Nasir said, "Good work, you have hit the mortar". Alam said, "I have seen only my rounds landing in the area". Nasir snorted, "You and your bloody gunner vocabulary. You take my word you have hit the damn thing".

On 28 November Lt Col Hakim ordered Nasir and a company 32 Baluch to attack enemy position on east bank of Tangam river near Biral. Alam fired 60 rounds white phosphorous mixed with HE, on suspected enemy positions. The bamboos caught fire and the position was captured without casualties to own side.

On 1 December at 0930 hours Alam saw Indian troops digging inside our territory near Phulbari, Alam had established his observation post on a vantage point and done some home work. The first round was on target. Alam ordered "Air burst, Fire for Effect". After a few salvos he changed over to ground burst. For two days there was no reaction from the enemy. On night 3 December there were sounds of tank movement. Next morning Alam was all by himself in the OP position. Some time later Capt Suleman (OC FIU) arrived with a section. At 1100 hours they received orders to withdraw. Alam covered the withdrawal with artillery fire. At 1200 hours the observer saw enemy tanks halted, the tank commanders were consulting maps. An Indian officer spotted Alam and Suleman and shouted, "Hands up. Surrender". The two officers and their men went

to ground. The Indians jumped into their tanks and started firing. Alam and Suleman clawed through the under growth until rescued by Maj Nasir. On 5 December Alam established his observation post in a bungalow south of Dinajpur. At about mid-day he spotted Indian vehicles moving towards Dinajpur which he engaged with salutary effect.

On 8 December, 4 Madras captured Kamalpur. Maj Nasir was ordered to recapture the position and Alam found himself once again alongside his friend. Artillery support consisted of 4x120 millimetre mortars and Nasir's force consisted of 40 all ranks. Alam fired 50 rounds on the objective and then Nasir and his men charged with pent up fury. Two jawans of 26 Frontier Force lost their legs on mines. Indian casualties were 10 dead and 6 prisoners including the company commander. On 15 December the party was ordered to Saidpur. Here they shot down an Indian aircraft. When Nasir went to capture the pilot another aircraft came strafing and Nasir got a bullet in the leg.

In November, Delta company of 8 Punjab was deployed in Patgram enclave. Artillery support consisted of two 105 millimetre howitzers, commanded by Capt Iftikhar AH. The company had one regular platoon, two platoons of Mujahids and one platoon of EPCAF. It was responsible for defence of approximately 10,000 yards front. However, the company commander Capt Ajmal deployed his platoons on a 3000 yards front either side of the railway line. The rest of the front was supposedly covered by listening posts. Earlier on Brig Naeem' had put the company in Kaliganj to guard the

ferry on Tista river. Gen Niazi stamped his foot and ordered the company into the mouth of Patgram enclave.

On night 21/22 November at 2100 hours Indians attacked the company in Patgram. The attack was preceded by preliminary bombardment. Fortunately the enemy came astride the railway line. And fortunately the Indians were firing illuminating shells, to guide the infantry on to the objective. Iftikhar ordered 'Fire'. Of course two shells do not break up a company attack. But the first salvo halted the Indians and before they recovered the guns pumped in shell after shell. The enemy left five dead.

Brig Naeem ordered the company to withdraw towards Rangpur. When Iftikhar and his guns reached Tista they found the ferries had been damaged and the rafts had been taken away. Iftikhar led the guns towards Lai Munir Hat. While on the road the party was ambushed. Two men got wounded. The guns were immediately brought into action and engaged the enemy with direct fire. One Indian soldier and three Muktis were captured. The party reached Rangpur on morning 23 November having been in continuous action for thirty six hours.

On 4 December Iftikhar was reinforced by two guns under Lt Sharif sent up from 80 Field Regiment. The guns were deployed in Niphamari on road Rangpur-Jalpaiguri. At 1400 hours 4 December they were ordered to move to Rangpur and reached the place at 1600 hours. Near Rangpur Lt Col Salim Zia with a company of 25 Punjab joined up with Iftikhar and party. Zia assumed command of the force. On 5 December the force was ordered to go to mile 24 road

Rangpur-Bogra to rescue GOC 16 Division who had been ambushed.

Twenty miles south of Rangpur, Zia deployed his troops. The troops went to work with a prescience acquired through eight months of adversity. The Indians started probing the position on evening

6 December. The first Indian attack came at mid-day

7 December. From his observation post Iftikhar saw about a dozen tanks at a distance of 600 yards. He gave out his fire orders. In the mean time two of our recoil-less rifles fired on the tanks and missed. The enemy tanks fired back and did not miss. Thereafter the tanks started shooting up Delta company position. The enemy infantry had dismounted when a salvo from our guns arrived on the rendezvous. The third connected with a tank which blew up. Another two salvos and the Indians withdrew. An hour later Indian aircraft hit the position with everything they had.

For two days there was some desultory exchange of fire. On 10 December Capt Iftikhar and Ajmal took out a patrol. As they crawled through the foliage they spotted an Indian tank and a section of infantry, their ears cocked towards the - opposite side. Ajmal sent a man with rocket launcher to shoot up the tank. The rest of the patrol went to ground. There followed ten agonizing minutes of nothing then a sharp crack followed by a welcome bang. The tank caught fire and enemy infantry scattered.

On 11 December, Indians put in a second attack. Lt Col Zia had anticipated the direction of attack and set up two recoil-less rifles to ambush enemy tanks. A company of Indian infantry and troop of tanks advanced through the

ambush unsuspecting and unscathed. Lt Col Zia and Capt Iftikhar rushed to the platoon position and Iftikhar started engaging enemy tanks, two of which were hit. Iftikhar was nicked in the leg by a bullet but continued to plough the target. The enemy left twenty dead and withdrew. Iftikhar was recommended for Sitara-i-Jurat. On 12 December at 0200 hours Zia force was ordered to withdraw to position between Palasbari and Pirganj. And there they stayed till the end of fighting.

205 Brigade was commanded by Brig Tajammal, a highly motivated officer. In October 1971 he was Director Staff Duties in General Headquarters. As the contingency of war with India became imminent he badgered the Military Secretary for posting to East Pakistan. He took over command in first week of November. 205 Brigade consisted of following troops:—

13 Frontier Force	180 Battery—Naogaon
8 Baluch	276 Battery—Jaipur Hat
4 Frontier Force	277 Battery—Hilli.

The brigade was supported by 80 Field Regiment. This unit was raised at Quetta in April 1971. It moved to East Pakistan in last week of August.

On Id day, 21 November, Brig Tajammal visited 13 Frontier Force and 180 Battery gun position. The troops complained that they had been repeatedly shelled by Indians but own guns had not been permitted to retaliate. Tajammal said, "O.K. Fire a salvo now"*.

Capt Kamran Tajak, a handsome and well composed officer, was observer on an out-post forward of Hilli railway station. A platoon of Delta company 4 Frontier Force was holding the out-post. The platoon was commanded by 2/Lt Salim. Observation varied from 1500 to 3000 yards. On night 20/21 November at 2000 hours Tajak saw silhouettes of Indian infantry at 800 yards distance. When the enemy neared the railway line he ordered "Fire".

The salvo straddled the railway line. The enemy went to ground and again advanced during the interval to the next salvo. Firing continued throughout the night. One section was over-run. Next morning the company commander sent Lt Mushtaq with ten men to recapture the position. Mushtaq charged in the manner of young subalterns. An Indian helicopter started raking the out post. Mushtaq was wounded in the arm and lost three men. Delta company received permission to withdraw to Bishenpara during night 21/22 November. Immediately before last light Indian PT 76 tanks moved towards Delta company position. Kamran engaged them with all six guns. The first two salvos landed in the area but did not hit anything. In the third salvo one round hit a turret. There was a spout of white flame and then the tank exploded.

On 22 November Brig Tajammal decided to counter attack with two companies 4 Frontier Force. The attack went in at 0700 hours. The battalion made a gallant effort but suffered heavily. Tajammal then set up positions to prevent further Indian advance. On night 2 December Lt Imtiaz, GPO 180 Battery, was ordered to take two guns to the home bank of Atrai river. At 0200 hours Imtiaz engaged targets in Balur Ghat.

On 3 December, while exerting pressure against Hilli, enemy tanks and infantry moved towards Nawabganj. To meet this threat Tajammal withdrew a company each from 8 Baluch and 13 Frontier Force and re inforced Nawabganj. At

1700 hours 3 December 2/Lt Munir(180 Battery) was ordered to take two guns to support Hilli position. Next day two more guns under 2/Lt Hamid Hussain were despatched to Hilli. The two officers had been term-mates in Military Academy. Hamid had volunteered for artillery to maintain family tradition. His uncle Maj Asadullah Shah had served in 7 Field and 35 Heavy Regiments. Before Hamid departed for the Academy Asad said to him, "Son, there is nothing as good as being a gunner".

The departure of four guns to Hilli left Mohsin with two guns to support 13 Frontier Force. The guns were deployed north of Atrai. After persistent hostile shelling the guns were ordered to be moved to south bank of Atrai. This was carried out on improvised rafts during night 4/5 December. By first light 5 December the guns were ready in action. On 7 December they were moved back to north bank where they stayed till 14 December.

On 12 December Mohsin had no communication with his battery or brigade headquarters. On evening 14 December a sepoy from 8 Baluch gave Mohsin a message from brigade headquarters to withdraw to Madhepur. On the way to the rear rendezvous the company moving ahead of the guns, was ambushed. Mohsin engaged the enemy with direct fire and the party, along with some civilian families, reached Madhepur on morning 15 December. Next morning they heard news of surrender from All India Radio.

2/Lt Hamid Hussain had deployed his four guns east of Hilli. The guns were in action by 1300 hours 3 December in support of company 8 Baluch and company 13 Frontier Force. The two companies had been despatched by Tajammal to prevent Indians by passing Hilli. On 9 December Hamid was ordered by Lt Col Tariq Anis to take one gun to forward defended localities and engage enemy tanks. There were no tanks. Hamid then withdrew the gun to the main position. The battery fired 1200 rounds on request from N/Sub Rahim Shah, observer with 8 Baluch.

At 1500 hours 10 December information was received that enemy tanks were operating behind 13 Frontier Force and 8 Baluch positions. Hamid took out one gun and engaged enemy tanks with direct fire. None of the tanks was hit nevertheless they withdrew to Bogra as the Indians were already behind 205 Brigade position around Hilli. On 11 December the guns were deployed 15 miles north of Bogra. On 12 December at 1700 hours the guns were ready in action in Bogra. The same day they were joined by remaining guns from other batteries. They were deployed for perimeter defence and kept on firing on suspected enemy positions from oft the map. On 16 December news of surrender was flashed.

Meanwhile in Hilli Indian tanks and infantry attacked Delta company 4 Frontier Force at 1000 hours 11 December. The company commander, Maj Peter, was wounded and the artillery observer Capt Kamran assumed command. The

Indian tanks veered off. At 1100 hours Kamran called for fire. Instead of the usual acknowledgement he heard Lt Irfan (GPO) ordering direct fire. In the exchange of fire one tank and one gun was knocked out. Four of the gunners were wounded. The Indians brought forward recoil-less rifles and started blowing up our infantry positions. Kamran was left with a platoon of R & S and some 15 wounded soldiers. Two of our own M24 tanks came up and started exchanging fire with Indian T55s. One of our tanks was immediately knocked out. Kamran requested the battalion commander for some reinforcements. He then came out of his observation post to check whatever was left of Delta company. He was immediately captured by a section of Indian soldiers. Next day Kamran was taken up to the GOC 20 Indian Mountain Division, Maj Gen Lachman Singh.

On 10 December the four guns under Lt Imtiaz were ordered to Khetlal about twenty miles west of Bogra. When they were about to start off, news reached Imtiaz that the road was blocked. Imtiaz took a side track and reached Dupehanchia where they remained deployed for two days. By morning 12 December they reached Bogra and were deployed for perimeter defence. On 15 December Maj Hayat saw some Indian tanks at 1200 yards range. One tank received a hit in the cupola and blew up.

L/Nk Hanif, 180 Battery, refused to surrender. He and some jawans of 29 Cavalry rushed at the Indian team. Hanif and his friends died with their weapons in their hands.

96 Brigade

96 Brigade was responsible for defence of Mymen-singh and Dacca districts—the area west of Megna, north of Ganges and east of Jamuna. It consisted of the following units :—

31 Baluch — Jamalpur-Kamalpur

33 Punjab — Haluaghat

(With in direct support 83 Mortar Battery consisting of three troops of 4x120 millimetre mortars each).

83 Mortar Battery moved from Lahore to Dacca in April 1971. It was to relieve 88 Mortar Battery. As advance party of 83 Mortar Battery came off the plane it was detailed to guard the VIP lounge on Kurmitula airport. A month later the twenty odd men were flown to Comilla where with some men from 88 Mortar Battery they were thrown together into a troop. Capt Mohammad Anwar was put in command and the troop despatched to Sylhet. They were reclaimed by 83 Mortar Battery in June 1971.

In November 1971 Maj Ghafar Shah was in command of the battery. Two of its troops were deployed

in support of 31 Baluch and the third troop in support of 33 Punjab. On night 21/22 November Indian artillery pounded 31 Baluch positions ahead of Kamalpur. At first light 22 November Indian infantry attacked 31 Baluch. Capt Aziz Javed, forward observer, spotted the enemy when they were hardly four hundred yards away. Licking his lips Aziz quickly spat out fire orders. By the time the first salvo landed the attackers had closed to within three hundred yards. Aziz ordered "Drop 300" and ducked. The ground erupted under the feet of attacking infantry, and of course some around Aziz's observation post. About fifty enemy dead littered the area.

On 3 December Brig Qadir ordered the battery to withdraw to positions ahead of Sherpur. One troop was broken up. Two of its mortars joined the troop in Sherpur the other two were sent to Haluaghata. Next day the troops were ordered to withdraw to Jamalpur. Thereafter the situation of 96 Brigade deteriorated rapidly as troops were ordered to withdraw from one position to another. On 11 December an Indian battalion para-dropped in Tangail. As 96 Brigade withdrew from Mymensingh towards Dacca they ran into ambush. The leading vehicles were destroyed and the remainder column turned back as best as they could. Next morning an attempt was made to break through the Indian position. It was a costly failure. Thereafter the troops were ordered

to destroy equipment and make their way towards Dacca.

On 17 November Brig Mansur, Commandant Artillery School Nowshera, received posting order to take over duties at Martial Law Headquarters in Dacca. The order was given on telephone and as usual was signed off with "Forthwith". Mansur arrived in Dacca on 19 November. Two days later Maj Gen Rahim, incharge of Martial Law Headquarters, was ordered to raise 39 Division and assume operational control of troops in Comilla—Chandpur—Feni—Chittagong. The Martial Law Headquarters packed up and most of the personnel went to Headquarters 39 Division.

On 9 December Brig Mansur received orders from Headquarters Eastern Command, "To carry out detailed reconnaissance of Demra-Narayanganj area so as to deploy troops in the sector generally along river Sita Lakhya, covering likely approaches of the enemy from general directions, Daud Kandi—Narayanganj and Chandpur—Narayanganj and to deny enemy access to Dacca". The troops for Sita Lakhya river line were to be those withdrawn from Chandpur. Mansur was appointed deputy to Maj Gen Rahim. Mansur collected the following

troops from around Dacca :—

- a. 12 Frontier Force less 12 FF had had a
two companies severe battering in
+ company 25 FF Akhaura—Brahaman
Baria.

- b. Company 25 Punjab
 - less platoon
 - + Platoon 21 AK
 - + Platoon Engineers
- c. Recruits from reinforcement camp.
- d. EPCAF, ordnance personnel, Naval ratings.

Of course the Indians did not assault across Meghna and Ganges. Indian forces were already closing on Dacca from north and north-east.

Maj Mohammad Saleem was posted to Headquarters Artillery Eastern Command in April 1971. There was little professional work for this well knit organisation. The personnel were employed on odd jobs in pursuit of Martial Law administration. In October the headquarters was ordered into Barisal and Brig Qasim was made the local Martial Law administrator. On 23 November they were ordered back to Dacca and reached destination by boat on evening 24 November. Brig Qasim was immediately made responsible for defence of Dacca.

Maj Saleem collected 16x6 pounder anti-tank guns and 4 x 120 millimetre mortars. The mortars were without sights. Saleem collected about 200 gunners from reinforcement camp and put them through a crash course. On 7 December the guns were test fired. By 12 December they were deployed in defence of important points in Dacca.

As the war progressed stray personnel homed on to Saleem's guns. They were fed and put to work. Occasionally a gunner would ask Saleem, "Saab kia baat hai", Saleem would grin and say, "Thik hai" Both sides sensed the awful humiliating end. Both refrained from pronouncing it, lest the words trigger their break down. When the end came the tears poured out in spite of themselves.

Anti-Aircraft Artillery in East Pakistan

Indian Air Force committed to support operations against East Pakistan consisted of ten squadrons MIG 21 and SU7. Against this Pakistan Air Force had one squadron of F86 Korean war vintage planes. Indian advantage in quality and quantity of aircraft was enhanced through the relative situation of operable airfields available to both sides. Pakistan Air Force could operate only from Dacca whereas Indian aircraft could operate from nine air fields surrounding East Pakistan.

Anti-Aircraft defence of Dacca was provided by 6 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. The unit started moving into East Pakistan in September 1971, to replace 43 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. The respective regimental headquarters and two batteries had interchanged when the war broke out. As a result 50 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery (ex 43 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment) joined 6 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment.

In December 1971 6 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment consisted of the following batteries :—

21 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery - Maj Durrani

34 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery - Maj Tehzib

161 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery - Maj Ghulam Mustafa

In middle November one troop commanded by Capt Mohammad Anwar, was sent to Chittagong. It was patched up to battery strength with some Razakars and Mujahids.

6 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment was commanded by Lt Col Mohammad Afzal, an officer with the confidence and grace of a natural leader. During enemy air attacks Afzal moved from gun to gun. His contagious smile was a tonic to the tired gunners. His visits were anticipated by the gun detachments with mugs of hot sweet tea. The generous hospitality might have relaxed the demands of discipline. Not for Afzal. He ensured that every one was properly barbered, washed and dressed. For his outstanding leadership in battle he was awarded a well deserved Sitara-i-Jurat.

The air attack on Dacca started with 190 sorties on 4 December, 82 on 5 December and 55 on 6 December. Thereafter the sorties dwindled to an average of 20 a day. 6 Light Anti-Aircraft destroyed total of 18 hostile aircraft over Dacca, 7 of them on 4 December. Five enemy aircraft were destroyed over Chittagong. Indian pilots attacked with determination, boldness and skill, flying as low as 75 feet. They

were met by the gunners of 6 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment with equal boldness, determination and skill. In Dacca the BBC correspondent Miss Hollingworth commented, "As a war correspondent it has been my great desire to see aircraft shot down by anti-aircraft guns. Today when I am watching the duels between Indian pilots and Pakistani gunners I can see the aircraft falling like toys".

On 4 December at 1100 hours Capt Sajjad was standing near one of his guns when four Indian SU7s attacked Dacca airfield. As the guns opened up one SU7 headed for them. It made four passes at one particular gun. The gunners responded with determined bursts of fire triggered with shouts of "Ya AW\ In the fourth pass the plane came straight for the gun. It was hit in the cockpit and crashed 50 yards from the gun position in vicinity of the reserve ammunition pit. The gun commander went round pulling and kicking the aircraft shouting, "My gun, My gun". Fortunately a fire truck came up within minutes and saved the situation.

A gun of 21 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery was strafed. The entire detachment was wounded. Col Afzal went to the gun bringing replacements. The gunners refused to leave the gun. Afzal said, "Don't be bloody fools. This is not a discussion group". The same gun of 21 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery was subjected to napalm attack. A bomb landed in

vicinity of the gun pit. The troop commander Capt Mahmood along with the gunners fought the flames. Lt Atta Awan another troop commander saw the incident and with some of his men came up to help. The flames came dangerously close to an ammunition pit. Lt Awan with the help of his jawans started taking out the ammunition. Later Capt Mahmood and party joined in. They had taken away eight boxes when they were forced out by the approaching flames.

As a result of almost continuous engagements ammunition expenditure was running ahead of supply. Capt Wahid collected ammunition from as far away as fifteen miles. On 8 December Lt Col Afzal had to restrict ammunition expenditure to 3 rounds per gun per sortie for 37 millimetre guns. The 14.5 quadruples were restricted to engagement with two barrels firing short bursts of twelve rounds per barrel.

Senior artillery officers in Dacca, Maj Gen Farman, Brig Qasim and Lt Col Umar made it a point of honour to visit the guns during air attacks. The regiment honoured the compliment by its performance. 6 Light Anti-Aircraft was awarded the following decorations :—

Si tara-i-Jurat

Lt Col Mohammad Afzal

Maj Fahim Durrani

Capt Mohammad Anwar

Lt Atta Mohammad

Tamgha-i-Jurat.

Hav Mohammad Latif

Hav Mohammad Iqbal

Hav Mohammad Aslam

Nk Mohammad Yousaf

L/Nk Abdul Rashid

Gnr Abdul Ghafoor

Conclusion

The deployment of guns in ones and twos was against the training and judgment of artillerymen. But artillery support had to be provided wherever the infantry was situated; and there was no means by which the range of guns could be stretched to suit deployment of infantry. By about 8 December the guns got concentrated in battery strength, more by force of circumstances than through design. By that time the enemy had gained his purpose whereas we had lost ours.

West Pakistan

ONE thousand miles removed from East Pakistan General Headquarters planned for war against India. War games and conferences started sometime in July 1971.

Pakistan's strategy, since 1947, was based on the assumption that the defence of East Pakistan vested in the offensive capability from West Pakistan. The merit of this strategy was not tested in 1948 or 1965. It was perhaps inspired by the wish to retain the bulk of armed forces near the hub of political power. There was little military substance in the approach. Pakistan would have to over-run Indian Punjab in order to balance Indian capability against East Pakistan. Considering the relative strengths and the geography of East Pakistan we never had the capability of achieving such balance. But even the chimera of merit in our professed strategy was lost in the civil war of 1971.

The breakdown of political talks in East Pakistan was proclaimed through the military action on 25 March. As violence spread in ever-expanding waves Pakistani troops were trapped in a hostile environment. By the token of 'enemy's enemy' the local population welcomed Indian troops as friendly forces. Under the circumstances Indian Army could wrap up the campaign in East Pakistan in about seven days.

Thereafter it would take another seven days to develop full combat power against West Pakistan. During the first seven days, therefore, Pakistan forces in the West had to acquire such real estate as would balance our defeat in the East.

12 Division (Map No. 1)

12 Division was ordered to capture Punch. It was envisaged that seven battalions would take part in the attack.

A subsidiary and a diversionary effort, by a battalion each, were planned to delay enemy reaction in support of Punch. Artillery support consisted of the following:—

3.7 inch howitzers	3 batteries	) direct support
105 mm howitzers	5 batteries	) of battalions
		) involved in
		) Attack
122 mm howitzers	3 batteries	raised in
		November from
		within existing
		Manpower
		Resources
5.5 inch guns	2 batteries	from flanking
		Brigades
Anti-aircraft	12	for defence of
40 mm guns		gun area and
		forward con-
		centration areas
		and attacking
		Troops
12.7 mm MGs	4	for bridge-head

Tracks had to be bulldozed to gun positions since most of these were inaccessible to vehicles. Two 105 millimetre batteries were ear-marked to move into the bridge-head after first light D-fl. The deployment of guns was completed by 27 November. Five second line lifts of ammunition were dumped on gun positions by 30 November. The fire plan consisted of 20 minutes preparatory bombardment, 3 1/2 hours time programme for assault and on call targets for subsequent phases. By 25 November the fire plan was co-ordinated by artillery commanders with their supported commanders. It was issued on 1 December 1971. Although D-Day had not been communicated the guns were ordered to be ready by last light 2 December.

12 Division Artillery was commanded by Brig Faiz Ali Chishti who had served in Azad Kashmir during 1948 and 1965 wars.

27 Mountain Regiment was in direct support of main attack. For the purpose of this operation 27 Mountain had the following units under command:—

1 x 105 mm pack howitzer battery	27 Mountain	Regiment
2 x 3.7 inch howitzer batteries	27 Mountain	Regiment
1 x 105 mm pack howitzer battery	25 Composite	Mountain Regiment

1 x 5.5 inch battery	2 Composite Mountain Regiment
1 x 105 mm pack howitzer battery	54 Composite Mountain Regiment
1 x Light Anti-Aircraft battery	

The attacking brigade consisted of four regular battalions and three Azad Kashmir battalions. The brigade plan for attack may be summarised as below :—

Alpha Battalion	Capture Gutrian post and Shahpur ridge by 0400 hours 4 December
Bravo Battalion	Occupy Thanpir, Booli and Pothi ridges
Charlie Battalion	Move behind Bravo Battalion and capture ridges dominating Mandi—Chandak road

Alpha Battalion was to capture Gutrian post and Shahpur ridge. Charlie and Delta companies were ordered to capture Gutrian by 2130 hours 3 December. Bravo company was to capture Shahpur I by 0300 hours and Alpha company to capture Shahpur II by 0400 hours 4 December. 96 Mountain Battery (Maj Shamim Shafqat) was affiliated to the battalion. Lt Asif Shah was forward observer with Bravo company and N/Sub Ghulam Zakria with Delta company.

At	1100	hours
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Maj Shamim briefed the observers and wished them luck.

At 1730 hours 3 December the battalion moved off. Shamim walked alongside Lt Col Sher Mohammad Khawary. At 1810 hours the artillery officer checked his communication. Because of the wireless silence the checking could not be fool-proof. At 1910 hours own guns opened on the first serial of preparatory bombardment. Thirty minutes later enemy retaliated with mortars and small arms. Charlie and Delta companies charged towards Gutrian post shouting war cries. The enemy allowed the attackers to close up to 300 yards and then opened fire with devastating effect. N/Sub Ghulam Zakria was wounded and his technical assistant Ghulam Ali was killed. Charlie and Delta suffered heavy casualties and broke up.

At 2000 hours Lt Asif checked communication with guns. There was some trouble. His line laying party was hindered by enemy shelling and could not keep up. An hour later Asif's set failed to communicate. At 2130 hours Asif got through to Maj Shamim on infantry net and requested fire on Shahpur I for 10 minutes. The guns responded as desired. Meanwhile enemy small arms and artillery fire started creeping towards the attackers. The infantry was forming up for attack when they were hit and dispersed. The company commander asked Asif to engage Shahpur. Asif got through to Shamim and obtained fire for 10 minutes. But enemy fire continued unabated. An enemy machine gun opened up from a flank causing more

confusion. The company commander requested permission to withdraw. Before moving back he checked that none of the wounded were left behind. The party was chased by enemy machine gun and artillery fire. At 0900 hours they reached Ari Dhok where they were ordered to take up defensive position.

Bravo Battalion was given the mission to infiltrate and occupy Thanpir, Booli and Pothi ridges to dominate Chandak—Punch road. The battalion had 195 Battery (Maj Riaz Bashir) in its direct support. At 1300 hours Lt Col Aziz (27 Mountain) briefed Maj Riaz Bashir, Capt Mashqur and Capt Sadiq about the attack plan. At 1500 hours the officers joined their affiliated units; Maj Riaz with battalion headquarters, Capt Mashqur observer Alpha company and Capt Sadiq observer Charlie company. Delta company had Capt Altaf Shamim (42 Composite Mountain Regiment) as observer.

At 2030 hours Bravo Battalion advanced from Kirni Gali towards Thanpir with Alpha company leading. At about midnight they came under small arms and mortar fire. There were no casualties. At about 0100 hours Alpha company started climbing Thanpir slope. The final run through was made by Alpha company towards Booli ridge, Bravo and Charlie on Thanpir and Delta on Pothi ridge. On way to Booli ridge Alpha company caught an Indian naik and learned that their objective was unoccupied. It was secured at 0400 hours 4 December without opposition. At 0600 hours

while the

infantry were still digging weapon pits they were surprised by an enemy patrol. The enemy was in its turn surprised by own commando platoon.

During the climb up the ridge Capt Mashqur's wireless operator stumbled and the set lost touch with guns. The observer tried to shoot through Bravo Battalion net but was held off by the traffic. Meanwhile Maj Riaz called for 'Uniform target' on Thanpir which facilitated operations of Alpha and Charlie companies. At 1100 hours Mashqur succeeded in getting permission to use infantry net for calling artillery fire. At 1600 hours he managed to bring his own set back to life.

During the day Indian infantry had surrounded Alpha company from three sides. Mashqur did his best to discourage the enemy from closing in. But he could take only one target at a time. Eventually the enemy closed in and shot up the observer's post. Mashqur pretended to be dead. At night he stumbled through to Salamabad where he learned that Indians were vacating Shahpur ridge and that Thanpir was in friendly possession. At 1500 hours 5 December he reached Thanpir in time to join the withdrawing troops. Maj Riaz was glad to see Mashqur; for two reasons. Riaz's signaller had been hauling the wireless set for 36 hours. He needed relief. Mashqur provided it. They left Thanpir at 1600 hours.

It had gone dark when Mashqur heard a tired

voice, "Is there any one from Bravo Battalion? I am your adjutant. I am wounded and cannot walk". Mashqur cautiously approached the voice and covering his flash light with handkerchief turned it on. The man was covered in blood. He had been wounded in the arm. Mashqur destroyed the wireless set, discarded his steel helmet and equipment, slung his rifle on left shoulder and half carried the wounded officer. They almost did not make it. At about 0100 hours they were challenged by an unfriendly voice. Then firing broke out. By 0400 hours 6 December Mashqur and Alvi stumbled on to Danna spur. To their dismay the place was occupied by Indians. The two officers hid for the day. At night Mashqur carried Alvi into Kirni and delivered him to the soldiers of Bravo Battalion. Their commanding officer had also been killed.

Capt Sadiq was observer with Charlie company. Bravo and Charlie companies occupied Thanpir by 0600 hours 4 December at a cost of 3 killed and 5 wounded. The application of 'Uniform target*' by Maj Riaz Bashir had melted opposition. On morning 5 December Riaz and Sadiq (27 Mountain) and Maj Khairat and Capt Alvi were holding Thanpir with about 50 men. At 1000 hours brigade headquarters ordered them to pull back. The Indians picked up this very time to attack. Sadiq called for regimental concentration. The Indian attack disintegrated. At 1530 hours when Riaz and Sadiq were winding up their gear a shell landed nearby, Sadiq was slightly wounded. As the party

moved towards rear it grew dark and they were fired upon from direction of Gutrian post. At 0700 hours 6 December they picked their way into Kirni village and from thence to their own guns.

Charlie Battalion had 80 Mountain Battery for direct support. The battery was commanded by Maj Javed Aziz Khan. At 1500 hours 3 December Lt Col Atta Dogar gave out his orders for attack; the mission, to capture Pindi Gali as soon as possible. Lt Amir ul Mulk was appointed observer with Delta company and Lt Pervez Ishaq with Charlie company. Curiously neither the battery commander nor observers were issued with relevant maps.

At 1830 hours the battalion moved forward with Delta company leading, followed by Charlie company. At 1940 hours own preparatory bombardment started off. At 2330 hours the battalion came under hostile artillery fire. Maj Javed Aziz's signaller Hav Sultan Mahmood was seriously wounded and his wireless set (No. 62) was put out of action. The porters carrying ammunition for Charlie Battalion dumped the loads for enemy fire to subside and resumed advance at about midnight. By 0600 hours they occupied the objective.

Sometime after midnight Maj Javed got separated from Lt Col Dogar. Javed ran into a section of Alpha company and the battalion doctor and porters carrying ammunition. They followed the sound of fire and made to the base of Thanpir by

0930 hours 4 December. They reached Pindi Gali at 1600 hours and were greeted by Dogar in his rich Punjabi. Javed checked with the observers. Lt Amir was alright but Lt Pervez was missing.

Pervez started off with Charlie company following Delta when the battalion was stopped by enemy fire. Dogar ordered Pervez to check the source of trouble. In moving from one vantage point to 'just the next one*' Pervez lost contact with Charlie company. By 0530 hours 4 December he found himself under fire from Gutrian post. He made his way to No. 2 Battery gun position where the second-in-command patched up his pride. Next morning, 5 December, he established his observation post at Kirni Gali.

Meanwhile on Pindi Gali Charlie Battalion was constantly harassed by hostile shelling. Lt Amir and Maj Javed tried to shoot up enemy position but there was little reduction in hostile fire. At 1400 hours 5 December Lt Col Dogar received orders to withdraw. The battalion returned to Kirni at 0530 hours 6 December.

The second brigade was ordered to capture Danna and at the same time hold its defensive position in area Chand Tekri, Battal. The brigade was given two additional battalions. The plan of attack consisted of five phases but on failure of phase I subsequent phases were not launched. Phase I consisted of capture of Danna, Sirian ridge, Qasba

Chechian Bandi, Punch and 'machine gun' post, each by a different battalion.

2 (Composite) Mountain Regiment commanded by Lt Col Waheed Sheikh was in direct support of the brigade. The regiment was made up to five batteries in order to provide affiliation to the attacking battalions.

H-Hour for attack on Danna was set at 2300 hours 3 December and was later postponed to 2330 hours.

Maj Shahid Abbas Naqvi (97 Battery) was called to brigade headquarter at 0830 hours 3 December. Lt Col Waheed Sheikh made him authorised observer. Shahid had no wireless set on division artillery net. There was strict wireless silence and he could not retune his own set. Neither did he get any task-table or information about the operation. Shahid hastened towards 27 Mountain Regiment, obtained the necessary information and along with his observers joined the battalion at 1600 hours. He detailed Capt Qaisar Mahmud with Alpha company and Lt Faqir Mohammad with Charlie company. At 2000 hours Shahid tried to communicate with guns. There was no response. According to original plan own artillery fire on objective was scheduled to terminate at 2320 hours. It did. Apparently no one had informed the guns about postponement of H-hour. Maj Shahid and commanding officer of the battalion were on a slope of Danna and none of their sets could communicate with brigade headquarters.

Capt Qaisar and Lt Faqir crossed the start line alongside their supported company commanders at 2330 hours. The enemy immediately reacted with small arms and mortar fire. A short distance from objective Maj Noor led Alpha company to charge enemy position. The company was hit by machine gun fire and went to ground. Maj Noor was wounded.

Charlie company went through similar experience. The company commander was wounded. Sub Jan Mohammad rushed forward with his platoon, was killed with a bullet through the head and thereafter the men hugged the earth. Faqir tried to communicate with the guns. There was no response. He moved the set two or three times for better results. In the third hop the signaller dropped with a bullet in his left thigh. Faqir picked up the set and moved towards the head of the company. The loss of company commanders, the break down of communication and the incidence of darkness destroyed command and control. By 0400 hours the men started moving back and the attack was called off.

Bravo and Charlie companies of second battalion were to capture Sirian ridge. The force was commanded by Maj Latif. Capt Junaid Qureshi joined the force as forward observer at 1730 hours. At 1935 hours they reached forming up place about 2000 feet below the objective which was being hit by own artillery. The advance was well synchronised with artillery fire plan. As Bravo and Charlie companies closed

within 150 yards of objective own artillery fire lifted. The leading elements flushed three enemy soldiers one of whom was killed and the remainder escaped.

Maj Latif held two platoons in hand and ordered remainder of Bravo and Charlie companies to take the objective. The enemy machine gun opened up and four men were hit. Junaid sitting next to Latif heard a short 'Oh'. He turned and saw Latif pitched on his back, blood spurting out of one eye. Simultaneously his wireless started crackling with excited querries from the company commanders. Junaid informed them about Maj Latif which information was relayed to battalion headquarters. Soon afterwards Junaid's position was hit by own artillery fire. The observer promptly stopped the nonsense. He then organised the two reserve platoons for defence. At 2340 hours Capt Mati, Charlie company, informed Junaid about suspicious enemy movement in his area. The observer engaged the target at 2355 hours and again at 0025 hours 4 December. There was no trouble from the enemy. By 0045 hours Bravo and Charlie companies had gathered around the reserve platoons. At 0130 hours the force was ordered to *exfiltrate\ On the way back they were chased by enemy artillery.

At 1500 hours 3 December Lt Col Nawaz gave out his orders for attack. Bravo and Charlie companies were to capture Qasba whereas Alpha and Delta companies were to capture Chechian Bandi. Capt Sardar Khan was detailed as forward observer with Bravo company and Lt Imtiaz with

Alpha company Bravo and Charlie companies captured Qasba at 2000 hours without incident.

At 2100 hours Alpha and Delta companies reached forming up place and were hit by enemy small arms and artillery fire. Maj Khalil (Alpha company) sent forward a patrol of one NCO and three jawans to check enemy bunkers ; whether they were occupied. The bunkers were visible from the forming up place. After ten minutes the patrol leader reported that the bunkers were only 50 yards away. Maj Khalil lined up both companies and ordered "Charge". The bunkers were indeed deserted.

At 2130 hours while Imtiaz, observer Alpha company, was trying to communicate with guns a shell hit his technical assistant Qadir Ahmad. A few seconds later bits of flesh and bone rained near Imtiaz. There was no trace of Qadir.

As Alpha and Delta companies were subjected to hostile fire Maj Khalil went round the position encouraging troops to hold their ground. At 0300 hours 4 December there was machine gun fire from Danna feature. At 0400 hours a subedar reported to Khalil that some jawans had abandoned their positions. Khalil tried to get through to battalion but failed. Some time later he ordered withdrawal. At 0600 hours they passed through Qasba. Near Kirni Gali Lt Imtiaz found the body of LtCol Nawaz. Imtiaz had it picked up and later handed it over to Maj Qayyum the second-in-command of the battalion.

Maj Mohammad Anwar (9 Mountain Battery) attended battalion 'O' group at 1730 hours 3 December. He explained the details of fire plan to company commanders. The battalion crossed Kirni Gali at 2245 hours. About an hour later it halted, believing it had reached Qasba. Maj Anwar corrected the impression. The battalion started moving towards Kamal Deri and forty-five minutes later stopped for the second time. The battalion commander conferred with the company commanders. A few minutes later casualties from Danna trickled through towards the rear. It grew daylight. Message came from brigade that Danna had been captured. A group of jawans appeared carrying the body of Lt Col Nawaz.

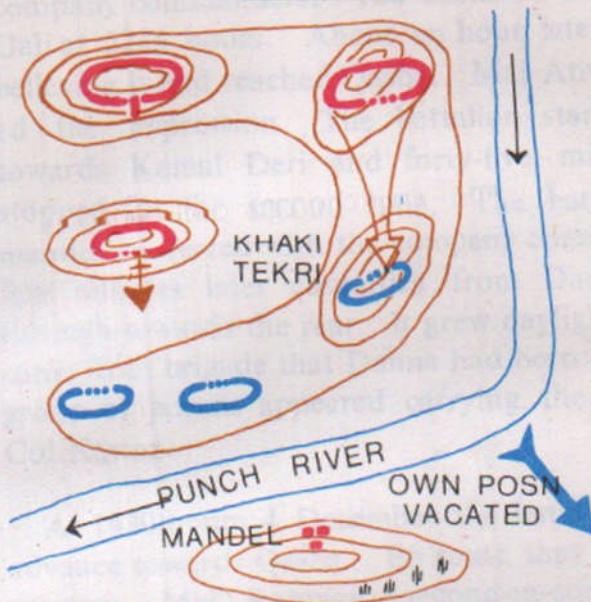
At 1430 hours 4 December the battalion resumed advance towards Qasba. En route they were hit by mortars. Maj Rahman, second-in-command, was killed. The leading company secured Qasba by 1800 hours 4 December. The remainder companies trickled in by first light 5 December. At 0800 hours an enemy machine gun opened up. Maj Anwar immediately reacted with a salvo from 63 Battery. The enemy vacated the position. At 0630 hours the battalion was ordered to move back to Kirni Gali and take up defensive position in area Bandi Abbaspur.

Alpha company, of another battalion was to capture an enemy machine gun post in front of Nattar and Charlie

company to secure another position ahead of Alpha. The battalion was supported by 6 Battery (2 Mountain Regiment). Maj Riaz-ur-Rehman had taken over the battery on 2 December.

2/Lt Khattak accompanied Alpha company as forward observer. The company left forming up place at 2000 hours. Two six pounder guns had been positioned to engage enemy, before H-hour, with direct fire. This they did for about five minutes. The effect of this fire could not be assessed. The left hand platoon captured left portion of the objective without much trouble. No word came from the platoon detailed to capture the machine gun post. 2/Lt Khattak kept on engaging the position throughout this period. The second-in-command reported to battalion that attack had been held up by enemy fire. At this stage Alpha company commander tried to close in on enemy position with his reserve platoon. The platoon suffered some casualties and went to ground. Khattak fell with a shell splinter in the chest and was later evacuated. The battalion commander then decided to send in Charlie company but the attack was called off by brigade headquarters.

On 11 December the Indians captured Khaki Tekri. At 0100 hours the battalion was hit by what appeared to be enemy preparatory bombardment. 6 Battery engaged some targets in response to calls from observers. The No. 1 gun was ordered to fire an illuminating round. There was some delay.

SKETCH -1SKETCH -2

EN COMMANDOS THREW
GRENADES FROM HERE



The signaller said, "Saab hamla ho giya". (We are under attack). Thereafter there was no communication.

Battalion headquarters was located about 3000 yards from gun position. Riaz took a half section of infantry and proceeded on foot towards the guns. The two sketch maps on opposite page roughly give layout of the battery position.

Riaz reached the gun position by first light.. There was no one in sight. All the four guns had been rendered unserviceable. Their muzzle brakes had been destroyed with explosives. The guns were deployed immediately behind a crest. The Indian commandos had set up machine guns to engage gun detachments. Own machine gun (.30 Brownings) manned by Mujahids opened fire. One of them stopped after firing two rounds. Meanwhile another party of commandos crawled up and started throwing hand grenades on guns. The surprise of the attack scattered the gunners and Indian commandos then applied charges to muzzle brakes and blew them up.

The battery had changed its manpower in November. The old personnel had been sent to a unit due to move to East Pakistan. The new personnel came from units equipped with 25 pounders and had to be converted to 105 millimetre howitzers in short order. The battery, like all other units, was working on half its authorised establishment of gunners. The shortage was made up with spot recruitment of Mujahids.

The response of a unit in battle is in direct relation to its training, comradeship, mutual confidence and association with equipment. In our preoccupation with civil war we had ignored these fundamentals. We were fortunate that the break occurred only in one unit.

Chamb (Map No. 1)

23 Division had the mission to capture Chamb. The division was commanded by Maj Gen Eftekhar Janjua, H.J., who had replaced Maj Gen Bashir on 23 September 1971. Brig NUK Babar, S.J., was the artillery commander.

On 30 November Eftekhar was called to GHQ. He returned at 1700 hours. On 1 December he gave out his orders for attack. D-Day was fixed for 3 December, H-hour at 2100 hours. At 1300 hours on 2 December Maj Gen Anwar Qureshi (VCGS) flew into 23 Division and confirmed D-Day.

Gen Eftekhar ordered mid-may meal 3 December for officers and men a Bara Khana, with all the trimmings. He said, "I do not want any soldier to go to battle on a grumbling stomach". At 1430 hours the general along with his artillery commander left for divisional artillery command post where division tactical headquarters was established. At 2000 hours Air Commodore Saeed Ullah arrived with a personal message from Air Marshal Rahim Khan, Commander-in-Chief Air.

Artillery support for the operation was provided by following units from 23 and 17 Division :—

- a. 11 Field Regiment Group
 - (1) 11 Field Regiment
 - (25 pounders)

- (2) 100 Medium Battery
 - ex 28 Medium Regiment
 - (155 mm howitzers)
- (3) 2x 7.2 inch guns
- (4) 285 Division Locating Battery
 - (6 x 3.7 inch howitzers)

This battery was raised in April 1971 as a locating unit. In October it was issued with 3.7 inch howitzers.

- b. 39 Field Regiment
 - (25 pounders)
- c. 50 Field Regiment
 - (122 mm (Chinese) howitzers)
- d. 63 Field Regiment
 - (122 mm (Chinese) howitzers)
- e. 51 Composite Mountain Regiment
 - (8x 105 mm (Italian) howitzers)
 - 4x 3.7 inch howitzers
- f. 71 Mountain Regiment
 - (105 mm (Italian) howitzers) with under command
 - 81 AK Battery
 - 8 x 25 pounders)
- g. 28 Medium Regiment Less Battery
 - (155 mm howitzers)
- h. 64 Medium Regiment
 - (155 mm howitzers)
- i. 16x 17 pounder guns were distributed all along the front and manned by Mujahids.

23 Division was opposed by 10 Indian Division. Artillery support to 10 Indian Division consisted of following units:—

- a. Field Regiments (25 pounders) 3
- b. Light Regiment (120 mm mortars) 1
- c. Mountain Regiment (105 mm (Italian) howitzers) 1
- d. Medium Regiment (5.5 inch guns) 1
- e. Medium Regiment (130 mm guns) 1

Own artillery units occupied gun positions on night 2/3 December. During day minimum movement was permitted in the deployment area. Watches were synchronised at 2000 hours 3 December. At 2015 hours Gen Eftekhar and Brig Babar stood outside the artillery command post to watch the first salvo of preparatory bombardment breakthrough the night. This was to be at 2030 hours. At 2020 hours about 3000 yards on left there was a flash followed a few second later by the sharp crack of a high velocity gun. There was a second shot. It was too much to hold back the rest. The gun position officers released the tension in their lungs with full throated 'Fire'. Eftekhar and Babar checked watches. The preparatory bombardment had gone off ten minutes ahead of schedule. Babar scowled and was about to jump into the command post when the general restrained him and said, "It is all right. Let the boys have fun". The premature bombardment had been triggered by a zealous Mujahid manning a 17 pounder gun.

At 0100 hours the attacking battalions reported capture of objective. As the two battalions consolidated their gains Lt Col Mazhar Rizvi (50 Field) directed divisional artillery fire on enemy strong points. At 0830 hours 4 December,

anticipating further advance, Brig Babar ordered reconnaissance of forward positions.

In the north a company from AK Battalion and a company of Zhob Militia were ordered to capture Mandhar post 2000 yards north-east of Laleal. Capt Qamar-uz-Zaman (71 Mountain) accompanied as forward observer. At 0200 hours 4 December the company Zhob Militia approached within 200 yards of enemy bunkers. Suddenly the angry buzz of machine gun bullets filled the air. The company commander Zhob Militia crawled to within a few yards of one bunker and lobbed a grenade. As soon as the grenade exploded he got up and a second machine gun shattered his chest. The Indians set up for a quick counter attack. Qamar stopped the enemy with battery concentrations. By this time the Zobs were themselves subjected to air-burst. By first light they were back in original position. The company of AK reached top of Mandhar and held off Indian attacks till first light 4 December. The two companies suffered 27 killed and 33 wounded in the short sharp action.

At 0300 hours 7 December second company of the battalion was ordered to capture Laleal hill. This company was commanded by Maj Mohammad Faruq. Capt Qamar-uz-Zaman accompanied as forward observer. The company had to be guided to forming up place with artillery concentrations indicating objective. In the forming up place they were greeted by hostile shells. Faruq and Qamar led the assault. About 100 yards short of objective Faruq was killed.

The company lost 24 killed, 29 wounded. Faruq was awarded Sitara-i-Jurat and Qamar got Tamgha-i-Jurat.

At 0500 hours 4 December after a hurried breakfast Eftekhar went to see the Cavalry group consisting of armour regiment and an infantry battalion. The armour regiment was commanded by Lt Col Khurshid and the infantry battalion by Lt Col Rashid. 64 Medium Regiment was placed in direct support.

The group had the mission to capture Mandiala. The tanks rolled forward of Kumali Chappar immediately after first light. Enemy artillery fired occasionally without causing much disturbance. At 0900 hours the tanks entered village Gura 1500 yards west of Mandiala. Past Gura they received compliments from Indian artillery and anti-tank weapons. Within minutes the leading tanks were hit. Capt Naqvi, forward observer with armour, got on a vantage point and engaged Mandiala. He saw the mushrooms of first salvo opening up on target. Then everything went blank. A splinter from enemy air burst hit him in the head. Capt Bash'r forward observer, engaged targets on Mandiala and Phagla.

Maj Imtiaz Bashir (225 Battery) and Capt Ashraf-ul-Huda managed to neutralise enemy anti-tank weapons enabling Alpha squadron to extricate. Meanwhile Lt Col Rashid attacked Mandiala with two companies and squadron tanks. The Indians watched their advance until within small arms range. Thereafter the fire was bad. Capt Huda kept enemy positions under fire while Capt Navid Rasul took a platoon

and attacked the ridge from rear. The Indians vacated the position. The battalion lost 20 killed and 30 wounded. Armour lost 9 killed and 12 wounded. Eleven of our tanks were hit.

On 4 December the GOC gave out following orders for operations to be conducted on 5 December :—

- a. One brigade to establish bridge-head across river Tawi in area Mandiala by first light 5 December.
- b. Armoured brigade to break out from bridgehead at first light 5 December, capture Pallan. wala and advance as far forward towards east as possible.
- c. Second brigade to probe forward towards Jhanda and Mandiala.
- d. Third brigade to move forward and take up positions along west bank of Tawi in area Mandiala crossing.
- e. Fourth brigade to advance to Chamb.

It was planned to establish bridge-head in area Mandiala crossing with two battalions. H-hour was fixed for 0200 hours 5 December. 81 AK Field Battery (Maj Irshad) was in direct support of left battalion.

At 0600 hours Maj Irshad and forward observers Capt Rafique Rana and Capt Siddique joined the battalion in Pir Mangowala. As they moved forward they received attention from enemy artillery. There were no casualties but Rafique's jeep refused to move. The observer party unloaded equipment and started moving on foot. Fortunately for them

Maj Rashid, brigade major, drove up and carried the party to Komali Chappar. At 2200 hours the battalion advanced to cross Tawi north of Mandiala ridge. The battalion was being led to the forming up place by second-in-command. The company commanders had already gone forward. The companies got separated; two companies veered off towards north and two reached Tawi. By morning 5 December the battalion was back in Komali Chappar.

At 2130 hours 5 December Rafique heard noise of tanks moving near Delta company. The observer promptly engaged a target in the area suspected of tanks. A few yards away Lt Col Sultan (71 Mountain) engaged a target with divisional artillery concentration. Half an hour later every one settled down for the night.

191 Medium Battery (4x 155 millimetre howitzers) was in direct support of second battalion. The battery was commanded by Maj Asif Iqbal. At 2100 hours 3 December Capt Anwar Miani led the guns into position in Kot Jaimal. The guns had to be moved in two shifts as the battery had only three tractors. However the gun programmes had already been worked out and the battery joined in the preparatory bombardment along with other units. At 1900 hours 4 December Maj Asif received orders to deploy guns in Khairowal 3000 yards south-west of Chamb.

As the battalion crossed Tawi enemy machine guns came to life. Capt Munir, forward observer, was hit in the leg but continued to engage targets until evacuated by his signaller. The second observer, Capt Riaz, lost his signaller as well as

technical assistant. He managed to call for fire using infantry set. By first light 5 December the battalion had returned to home bank.

At 1200 hours on 5 December General Eftekhar gave out fresh orders :—

- a. Armoured brigade capture Chak Pandit.
- b. Fourth brigade capture Chamb.
- c. South brigade advance as far forward as possible in direction of Munawar and Chatti Tahli.
- d. North brigade defend Mandiala.
- e. AK battalion capture Laleal.

South brigade had been ordered to capture New Rana, Bhusa, and Takho Chak.

On 2 December Lt Col Riaz (11 Field) visited Capt Pervez Mehmood's observation post in Barila. The colonel told the captain, "Today we attack Bhusa post". At 1700 hours Riaz ordered Pervez to accompany Maj Sarfraz (Alpha company 17 FF) as forward observer. The company moved into assembly area after last light and waited. At 2230 hours they were informed that the attack had been put off for 24 hours. On 2 December the pantomime was repeated. On 3 December the attack got off as scheduled. Capt Pervez had a No. 19 wireless set carried by three men. During the move forward of start line the three men got separated and Pervez was left without communications. Fortunately there was little opposition from Bhusa.

At first light 4 December Pervez saw Indian infantry forming up for attack near Jhanda. The forward observer rang up the adjutant (Maj Rashid), "Target uniform 7475 give it whatever you have got". Rashid said, "Do not worry". The regiment fired for 15 minutes. Next morning our patrols counted 10 dead on the scene.

At 1600 hours 2 December Capt Riaz (285 Battery) was ordered to relieve Capt Fazal Rehman as observer at Nadala. Next day he acted as forward observer with a composite force attacking Takho Chak. The force consisted of a company regulars, company Sutlej Rangers, two companies Zhob Militia and company Mujahids. 36 Battery 11 Field was placed in direct support of the force. The attack went off as scheduled. Riaz engaged some targets during the advance. The objective was captured without casualties.

At 1430 hours 3 December Lt Col Jafree, gave out his orders. Alpha and Charlie companies were to capture New Rana and Bhusa. The objectives were secured by 2030 hours. Capt Tahir was observer with Delta company positioned south of Munawar. At 0730 hours 4 December the observer saw enemy recoil-less rifles in vicinity of Munawar firing on Delta company. The targets had been previously surveyed. Tahir opened with 2 rounds gun fire. It was enough. At 1000 hours Brig Zahir came upto the observation post and questioned Tahir about enemy strength in Munawar. "Approximately one company". The brigadier was not convinced. At 1100 hours Brig Zahir gave out orders, "Capture Munawar by last light 4 December with two companies?" A squadron Shermans was placed under

command. H-hour was set at 1530 hours. At the same time another battalion was to attack Jhanda, 4000 yards west of Munawar. Lt Col Riaz pointed out the lack of mutual support between the two battalions and the inadequacy of artillery support. Time being short Lt Col Riaz sat down to make a hasty fire plan while Tahir was ordered to register targets. The registration was completed by 1430 hours. Thereafter Tahir joined his battalion as forward observer. The tank squadron could not reach assembly area by 1530 hours and H-hour had to be postponed to 1545 hours.

As the infantry approached start line enemy machine guns opened fire. One sepoy was wounded, the remainder hit the ground. Lt Col Jafree swished the elephant grass with his swagger stick, cursing, and managed to get the troops moving forward again. 600 yards from Munawar he led the charge. Tahir kept company with his signal party carrying 62 set.

Delta company veered off towards the left while Bravo company reached 300 yards short of objective. As Jafree set out for Delta company some one shouted, "Aage mine*". Both companies went to ground. Tahir saw four or five Indians in black overalls cautiously advancing towards own infantry. They were guiding a tank. The tank opened fire with machine gun. Tahir ordered a round of gun fire on the tank. As the first salvo shrieked overhead, the signaller dived for cover, and that marked the end of Tahir's communication. Col Jafree while moving forward was knifed through the chest with stilettoes of tracers. He

pitched forward. Someone shouted, ⁴"Withdraw". The attack petered out.

Tahir reoccupied his observation post. There were no friendly troops. By 1800 hours he managed to restore line communication with guns. By 2000 hours the wireless was through. At 1900 hours Col Riaz rang up, ⁴"Tahir you can come back if you want to". Tahir opted to stay on and was given priority of fire. At 2300 hours the brigade commander rang up and promised help. At 0300 hours Maj Nawaz, brigade signal company, arrived with ten men. By first light 5 December another company joined up. Tahir fired away at a couple of irksome targets. The Indians returned the compliment.

At 2200 hours another battalion was ordered to put in a second attack on Munawar. Maj Sarfraz led the attack. H-hour was set at 0230 hours

6 December. Tahir was made authorised observer and watched the attack from his observation post at Mattewala. H-hour was postponed to 0530 hours. Preparatory bombardment started 0430 hours and covering fire continued with the same tempo. Munawar was captured by 0600 hours, without resistance and without casualties.

On 5 December Gen Eftekhar established his tactical headquarters in a school in Kumali Chappar. He was working on fresh orders when 20 Indian wounded soldiers were brought in. The general complimented them for courage, shook hands and then ordered, "No interrogation until these soldiers have been properly fed and attended to".

Eftekhār ordered fourth brigade to capture point 994 about 1000 yards east of Uprali Banian, at south end of Phagla ridge, by last light 5 December. H-hour was fixed for 1630 hours. Maj Niamat (39 Field) was made authorised observer and set up his observation post on a rise from where he could observe targets on Phagla ridge. The ridge is a natural defensive position dominating approaches to Chamb.

An infantry battalion with a squadron of tanks were nominated for the task. As the battalion came ahead of Uprali Banian it was subjected to artillery fire. Nevertheless point 994 was captured. At 0300 hours 6 December the enemy counter attacked. Capt Bangash took on enemy tanks with his two Shermans. Both the tanks were shot up in short order. Bangash was killed. The battalion had lost 18 dead, It was ordered to establish defensive position in area Uprali Banian.

During the night 5/6 December Brig N U K Babar assumed command of the brigade. At 0500 hours 6 December Babar came up to Niamat's observation post and gave out orders for another attack on Phagla ridge. Another battalion with a squadron of armour was assigned the mission. H-hour was set at 0600 hours 6 December. Brig Babar accompanied the assaulting troops. When the battalion was about 1000 yards from the objective the enemy fired with maximum ill will. A shell hit a tree and a splinter screamed into Babar's shoulder. The GOC immediately ordered his evacuation. Thereafter the attack petered out. Babar was awarded Sitara-i-Jurat.

The attack on Phagla ridge had been hastily prepared. Targets had been picked off the map and the infantry had barely time to go through the motions of battle procedure. Artillery support consisted entirely of engagement of one target at a time and presumed infallible communications. It did not work.

At 0200 hours 7 December Brig Abdullah Malik and Brig Kamal Matin-ud-Did arrived in Padhar.

For the second attack on Chamb Eftekhar ordered Armoured Brigade to attack through Chak Pandit from south. Babar's brigade with two battalions, squadron armour to attack Phagla ridge, third battalion was to follow through and capture Chamb. For its attack through Chak Pandit towards Chamb the armoured brigade had an infantry battalion under command. 28 Medium Regiment (less battery) and 226 Medium Battery were in direct support of the brigade. The armour units had to carry out a difficult, cross country, night move to get to their assembly area. The move was completed with commendable efficiency.

Brig Sardar ordered the infantry battalion and a squadron tanks to capture Barsala and then advance towards Chak Pandit. 226 Medium Battery was allotted for direct support of the group. The battery commander Maj Imtiaz accompanied infantry and Capt Ashraf-ul-Huda went with armour squadron as forward observer. About 2000 yards short of Barsala the group was stopped by mines and enemy artillery hit the area. One tank was hit. Ashraf-ul-Huda immediately reacted with 226 Battery. He stood up on the bonnet of his jeep for better

observation, was hit by a shell splinter and rolled to the ground.

The remainder of armoured brigade was ordered to cut road Munawar-Chamb north of Nageal and capture Chak Pandit. At 0800 hours the infantry captured Bakan, 3500 yards south-west of Barsala. There was no resistance. As the tanks advanced east of Bakan they were set upon by Indian aircraft. The tanks dispersed but with their machine guns brought down an SU7. The advance was resumed. Two thousand yards short of Barsala the tanks were halted by what looked like a mine field. The tanks started probing the area for gaps. Lt Col Ihsan engaged Barsala with 28 Medium.

At 1345 hours Eftekhar flew into Chanir and impressed on Brig Sardar the urgency of getting into Chamb. Sardar took Lt Col Abdul Hamid Dogar and Lt Col Ihsan (28 Medium) and the three officers in their open jeeps led the tanks through the suspected mine field towards Jhanda. Three tanks lost their tracks on mines but were soon put into action. Ihsan kept Barsala under fire. The armoured brigade rolled into Chak Pandit at 1700 hours.

At first light 7 December Brig Abdullah Malik's brigade from west and armoured brigade from south approached Chamb. The place was kept under heavy bombardment from 0600 hours onwards. As the enemy vacated Chamb the place started receiving ill-will from both sides. At 0830 hours leading elements entered the town. Among the equipment captured was a command vehicle with all its trimmings.

At 1400 hours 7 December Gen Eftekhar flew into Chamb. At 1530 hours he issued orders for attack across Tawi.

- a. Armoured brigade with infantry battalion cross Tawi east of Nageal and capture Pallanwala soon after dark.
- b. Brig Malik with armour regiment (less squadron) break through from area Chak Pandit and capture Khaur and Jaurian.
- c. Armoured brigade to be relieved in Chamb by Brig Malik which in turn was to be relieved by another brigade at midnight 7/8 December.

H-hour for armoured brigade attack was fixed at 1700 hours 7 December. Brig Sardar and Lt Col Rauf represented against the inadequacy of time for preparation. The GOC maintained the timing. At 1700 hours Brig Matin was called to Chamb. He arrived at 1800 hours and learned about the attack. As it grew dark Indian fire from across Tawi became uncomfortable. The artillery fire order line was cut. Maj Niamat using his GRC 9 engaged some targets with divisional artillery. Enemy fire eased up.

As Sardar and Rauf left Chamb for Shingri their jeep was hit by Indian aircraft. The driver was killed. Rauf was wounded in left foot and ankle. Sardar was untouched. At 1900 hours Sardar gave his orders. Infantry battalion was to make firm base across Tawi. H-hour was postponed to 0100 hours 8 December At 0030 hours Brig Sardar, Lt Col Dogar,

Lt Col Ihsan (28 Medium) waited for infantry to turn up. There was no sign. Artillery bombardment started off at 0030 hours as scheduled and continued till 0130 hours when it was stopped. The attack was postponed to 0600 hours 8 December.

The artillery regiments had been repositioned to support attack across Tawi. However, there was little time to obtain information about hostile weapons. Targets had therefore to be picked off the map. At 0500 hours 8 December Lt Col Tressier formed up near Chamreal. The leading two companies led by Tressier entered the river, waded across to east bank and were counter-attacked. The battalion lost 10 killed 21 wounded. At this stage Gen Eftekhar called off the attack and ordered Brig Malik to make plans for capturing Pallanwala. Brig Abdullah Malik requested for H-hour not before last light 9 December. The general agreed. At this stage a tank regiment was ordered by GHQ to be withdrawn from 23 Division.

At 1600 hours 9 December the GOC left in his helicopter to meet Brig Malik. At 1615 hours the telephone in division operations room rang. Lt Col Saeed picked it up. An excited voice broke into his thoughts, "The general's helicopter has crashed". Eftekhar was badly burnt. He was Mown to Kharian. His last conscious words were, "You bloody well capture Pallanwala¹". During the night, after a fit of vomiting, he died. Pakistan lost an excellent combat commander and a great gentleman.

Brig Kamal Matin assumed temporary command of 23 Division. The attack on Pallanwala started off as planned. As the leading battalion neared Chak Pandit at 2330 hours 9

December they were hit by enemy artillery. Alpha and Charlie company commanders and a dozen men were wounded. Nevertheless the battalion continued to advance and reached Tawi at 0145 hours 10 December. The wounded company commanders had been replaced by the second-in-command and a 2/Lt. At this stage another series of concentrations hit the battalion. Lt Col Ehsan was wounded and evacuated. Maj Niamat (39 Field Regiment) virtually assumed command of the battalion. The casualties mounted up.

At 0700 hours 10 December Lt Col Dogar took the leading tanks across Tawi. Along with Col Dogar rode Maj Pervaiz Minhas (28 Medium). As Dogar and Minhas were getting the tanks organised for assault an enemy shell landed close by. Dogar was wounded and Minhas was reported missing. At 1230 hours the armour unit reported heavy losses. At the same time information was relayed by GHQ that a large enemy tank and infantry force were reported moving towards Jaurian. At 1400 hours Malin ordered own artillery to engage enemy concentrations and called off the attack.

On 10 December Maj Asif (191 Medium Battery) took Capt Anwar Miani to Mandiala. Asif established his observation post in a slit trench over-looking Tawi bridge. Twenty yards towards his right Cap; Miani established his observation post, also in a trench. At 1000 hours Lt Col Feroze Alam climbed up to Miani's observation post carrying some freshly cooked rice. Feroze Alam said, "Miani there are some Indian tanks in hull down positions across Tawi. They are a bloody nuisance. Please do something".

Miani searched the area with his binoculars. There were about half a dozen tanks shooting up the battalion. The observer carried out precision shoots on three tanks. The firing subsided.

At 1600 hours Miani and Asif found time to gobble up the cold rice. Ten minutes later they were back in their trenches registering targets across Tawi. An enemy tank started shooting up the observation post. Miani shouted a warning to Asif but the officer continued with his registration. There was a loud detonation. Miani saw only dust where Maj Asif had been standing. He crawled over and found Asif lying on his side with a cavity in his chest and bits of entrails and bloody rice in place of abdomen. The deployment of artillery fire power available to 23 Division was in contravention of the principle of concentration. The division was supported by eight regiments. This fire power was distributed to support simultaneous attack by four brigades. The distribution of artillery support militated against the suppression of hostile weapons to a level of acceptable opposition. West of Tawi the Indians had border security forces backed by covering troops from regular forces. Their purpose was to delay and define Pakistani attack. By distributing our. artillery fire power over 30,000 yards the Indians were enabled to attain their aim.

Sialkot (Map No. 2)

In Sialkot no amount of ingenuity, on part of 1 Corps, could compensate the shortage of troops and fire power. The troops had to be stretched out to the utmost limit, militating against efficient command and control, increasing the strain of loneliness in battle, diluting combat effectiveness of units.

The guns of course had to conform to the requirements of supported formations, units and sub-units. In order to counteract dispersion of artillery fire, batteries prepared as many as 15 positions each for quick occupation in relation to enemy threat.

On 20 November Gen Yahya and Gen Hamid visited 8 Division. The division was commanded by Maj Gen Ehsan-ul-Haq Malik. Gen Yahya pointed out to Ehsan that one approach was rather thinly held. 8 Division had three brigades and had to defend a front of approximately 120,000 yards. Ehsan replied, "Sorry sir. Nothing can be done about it. I have three brigades which I have disposed off as best as I can. If this approach has to be held in greater strength I need one more brigade". Ehsan was promptly replaced by Maj Gen Abdul Ali Malik and 8 Division was given two additional brigades.

The dispersion of troops resulted in some nervousness on the opening day of war. Almost every one reported being under attack. In 60 Field Regiment the second-in-command Maj Sharif soon brought the observers to order. Sharif had been posted from Artillery School Nowshera on 2 December and took over after last light 3 December when the regiment was already deployed. At 2000 hours 3 December an observer reported that the position of his company was receiving mortar fire. Sharif quietly asked, "What are you supposed to do" ? There was no answer. Sharif added, "Why have you not initiated mortar report" ?

At 2300 hours another observer called for fire. Sharif questioned him about the call.

"What is the nature of target" ?

"Enemy vickers machine guns firing on own troops".

"Was the lire effective" ?

"Negative".

"Can you see any enemy troops" ?

"Negative".

Maj Sharif shot back with some, sharpness, "Then what the hell are you trying to hit" ? Thereafter the observers settled down.

The shortage of guns necessitated frequent regrouping. As an illustration 83 Medium carried out seventeen moves during the period 3 to 16 December. 33 Heavy sent 124 Battery to 83 Medium on night 7/8 December. On night 10 December 123 Battery was exchanged with 253 Battery 72 Medium. Also 289 Battery from 83 Medium joined 33 Heavy. By morning 11 December 33 Heavy consisted of:—

125 Battery from 33 Heavy Regiment 253 Battery from 72 Medium Regiment 289 Battery from 83 Medium Regiment.

Headquarters Artillery 17 Division and all its units were employed in support of 23 Division in Chamb. 61 (SP) was employed in reinforcing defence. Units of Artillery 1 Corps were similarly employed. Armoured division artillery remained on wheels "To be available on the spur of the moment" for offensive operations. Only on night 3/4 December was it employed to support attack on Dharam enclave.

The Commander 1 Corps, Lt Gen Irshad, and Commander Artillery 1 Corps, Brig Iqbal Malik, were not on the best of terms. Long before the war, when Headquarters 1 Corps was

established in Gujranwala, its artillery component was driven nine miles out into Nandipur. Brig Iqbal had little to do with coordination of artillery support within 1 Corps. Even for attack on Dharam enclave Iqbal and his headquarters were kept out of the picture.

Dharam is an Indian enclave west of river Ravi opposite Narowal. It is a wasteland measuring some 5000 by 9000 yards covered with 12 feet high elephant grass. The demarcation of border gives Dharam a particular tactical significance. In case of attack along Narowal-Pasrur-Sialkot axis it is the most suitable place for initial deployment of Indian forces west of river Ravi.

Gen Irshad planned to capture the enclave at the outbreak of hostilities. Artillery support consisted of following units:—

In direct support		78 Field Regiment.
In support	a.	8 Division Artillery
	b.	57 Field Regiment
	c.	145 Battery ex 8 Medium Regiment
	d.	Armoured Division Artillery (1) 1 (SP) Field Regiment (2) 44 (SP) Field Regiment

- (3) 32 Medium Regiment
- (4) 112 Battery
- 67 Light Anti-Aircraft
 Regiment
- e. Ex Armoured Brigade 61 (SP)
 Field Regiment
- f. Ex Artillery 1 Corps
 - (1) 72 Medium Regiment less
 battery
 - (2) 109 and 211 batteries ex 29
 Light Anti-Aircraft
 Regiment.

The fire plan was coordinated by Brig F. B. Ali, than whom there was no one better qualified in understanding and employment of fire power. Ali took over command of armoured division artillery on 30 November. His predecessor Brig Salim had been evacuated to hospital in early November. Salim had lost one eye in an accident with a .50 machine gun. He was losing sight of his second eye when evacuated. Lt Col Raja Ikram Ullah— 44(SP) —took over as officiating commander artillery during the interval between Salim's departure and Ali's arrival. On 20 November Ikram went to Mirpur to celebrate Id. On evening 21 November he returned to Kharian and was greeted by his jeep driver, "Saab jang hone wala". Ikram hurried to Sialkot. Near Pasrur he was greeted by Gen Ehsan in his usual relaxed drawl, "Raja, I

hope you do not mind. I have deployed your formation'\

78 Field Regiment was raised in April 1971, carried out calibration on 28 June and was deployed in operational area on 26 September. The regiment was commanded by Lt Col Arshad Ali Hamadani. In November the battery commanders and observers joined their affiliated units. Immediately after the deployment Maj Khawaja Hamayun (272 Battery) was ordered to assess enemy opposition in Dharam enclave. Hamayun got on top of an observation tower and searched the place with his binoculars for seven days and nights. In November reconnaissance by Army Aviation confirmed his findings. Hamayun was then ordered to carry out target area survey which he did with his regimental surveyors. The coordinates were sent to brigade who expressed doubt about their accuracy. The survey was carried out for the second time and confirmed the original coordinates. But brigade headquarters remained adamant. Hamayun visited the relevant staff officer and was informed, "Your coordinates do not agree with those we have worked off air photos". Hamayun checked. The photos were oblique ones taken in 1965.

On 30 November responsibility for Dharam was transferred to another brigade. It had 57 Field as its direct support regiment.

At 1100 hours 2 December Brig F. B. Ali finalised the fire plan with commanding officers of artillery units

supporting the operation. Task tables were issued at 1300 hours 3 December. Artillery units supporting the attack occupied positions after last light 3 December. Maj Shahid Saulat (119 Battery 32 Medium Regiment) was appointed authorised observer. He was to destroy boat bridge on Ravi. Saulat established himself on a tower north of Jassar.

At 2030 hours two of our tanks collided outside Narowal at the triangle Narowal-Shakargarh-Pasrur roads. The tanks were moving without lights and there seemed to have been no traffic control arrangement in the congested area. The accident occurred near 32 Medium positions. As the ammunition exploded some GPOs and observers reported hostile shelling. The line communications of 1 (SP) and 44 (SP) regiments were mangled by the tanks ; and wireless silence was to be maintained until H-hour, barely 30 minutes away. The first serials were to go off at 2110 hours. With occult efficiency at 2110 hours minus the time of flight, the GPOs sent the shells screaming towards their targets.

Maj Latif Hussain Shah (270 Battery) along with Capt Khawar Sultan and N/Sub Abdul Malik and Maj Mohammad Zaman (271 Battery), Capt Abu Nawaz Mutaher and N/Sub Mohammad Ishaq accompanied the attacking battalions. H-hour was fixed at 2000 hours 3 December. Preparatory bombardment lasted 25 minutes.

At 0600 hours 4 December, when Lt Col Abbas Ali's battalion was 1000 yards short of bridge, two hay stacks started emitting machine gun bullets. The colonel quickly rallied the battalion and attacked the hay stacks with hand grenades. Five enemy soldiers were killed and three captured. There was little occasion to call for artillery fire. At 0800 hours enemy artillery started shelling battalion positions. This was followed with an attack by SU7 aircraft. There was no damage. At 1000 hours some enemy tanks took up hull down positions on opposite side of Ravi and started shooting. Forward observer Capt Khawar Sultan carried out a precision shoot on one tank and then brought down a medium and a field battery. One tank was hit and the remainder pulled out. The disabled tank remained a ranging point for the rest of the war.

At 2200 hours 4 December the battalion was relieved by a new one. There was some trouble between the two commanding officers about artillery observers. Commanding officer of the new battalion insisted on taking over the observers who knew the area. Lt Col Abbas insisted on retaining the artillery officers whom his battalion knew. He won.

At 1000 hours 5 December Maj Mohammad Amir (61 SP) saw what appeared to be an artillery reconnaissance party. They were about 4000 yards from the observer, but the target had been recorded. Amir called for a round of gun fire from 32 Medium. The Indians heard the angry shells and hurried away. Amir chased them with another round of gun fire.

At 1800 hours 5 December 1 (SP) and 44 (SP) received orders to withdraw and concentrate with armoured division. There was some trouble about transporters. But Brig F. B. Ali, Col Javed Iqbal (Colonel staff) and Lt Col Raja Ikram sorted it out. The units moved out at 2300 hours.

With the departure of Brig F. B. Ali's headquarters Lt Col Nazir (32 Medium) was ordered to exercise control of units remaining in support of the infantry brigade. These included :—

57 Field Regiment
61 (SP) Field Regiment
32 Medium Regiment
112 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery.

32 Medium Regiment Headquarters was supposed to exercise fire control on its own batteries as well as 57 Field and 61 (SP). The inadequacy of communications in this adhockery led to some picturesque language between observers and adjutants.

During night 5/6 December the enemy tried to cross Jassar bridge. The place was well covered by observers. At 0300 hours 6 December enemy infantry was heard shouting from across Jassar bridge. Alpha company had been over-run. Maj Bahadar Nawaz engaged the bridge with 57 Field and 32 Medium. Firing from both sides stopped at 0530 hours. Near the observation tower Capt Aftab saw a wounded sub-inspector from Rangers and 8 Jawans. The observer had them evacuated in his jeep. Some time later Maj Kiani

(Bravo company) came up with 20 jawans and dug in on home bank of Ravi.

At 0730 hours enemy SU7s attacked own tanks. The tanks fired back with .50 Browning machine guns. One aircraft was hit and the pilot captured.

On 3 December Brig Nisar Ahmad Khan, Commandant Armoured Corps Centre, was ordered by GHQ to report to Maj Gen Abdul Ali Malik, GOC 8 Division. Nisar arrived in Qila Sobha Singh at 2110 hours just as the first serials in support of Dharam operation went off. Malik made him force commander Changez Force consisting of the following units:—

Armour regiment (35 tanks) - in direct support 106
Medium Battery

Armour regiment (41 tanks) - in direct support 38
Medium Battery

Infantry battalion

(not motorized)

12 Medium Regiment (Lt Col Akhtar) was placed in direct support and units within range were available to support the force. Maj Naseem Pitafi (106 Battery) along with Capt Allauddin, Zia Tariq and Amin was affiliated with senior armour regiment, Maj Haroon Rashid (38 Battery), Capt Sohrab and N/Sub Gul Mohammad with the second armoured

regiment. Infantry battalion had Capt Mohammad Ali from 33 Heavy and Capt Irshad from 83 Medium.

The mission of Changez Force was to delay enemy forces advancing between Basantar nullah and Bein river for 24 hours at the first position and for 48 hours at the second position. The front measured 18,000 yards. At 1900 hours 3 December the senior armour unit took up delaying positions covering the first minefield. Capt Zia and Capt Amin (12 Medium) accompanied as observers. The second unit was deployed to cover the second minefield and the infantry battalion was deployed in Tola. On night 4/5 December Zia and Amir heard tank noises coming from Indian territory. They took cross bearings, checked it was the same target and rang up Lt Col Akhtar Malik (12 Medium) requesting fire. At first light 5 December enemy fire destroyed our observation tower ahead of Dandout. Wisely Zia had kept away from the tower. At 1200 hours he saw some unusual disturbance in the tall elephant grass. A few seconds later came the roar of tanks. As he searched the area with binoculars Zia gave out fire orders. The medium shells landed in the middle of tanks. The observer continued the punishment until he saw some pillars of smoke rising above the grass. At 1230 hours artillery observers at Sukhmal reported enemy troop deployment in preparation for attack. The target was out of range for 78 Field guns. Maj Hamayun (78 Field) communicated the fire request to 12 Medium but the latter was already responding to Zia and Amin.

At 1600 hours the enemy started registering target from Dandout to Sukhmal. Preparatory bombardment started at

1900 hours followed by armour and infantry attack against Chak Jangu, Dandout and Sukhmal. At 1930 hours Hamayun ordered 272 Battery to engage enemy with charge super. After the engagement the GPO reported, "Battery out of action". A horrified Hamayun was informed that the old 25 pounder guns could not withstand the excitement of charge super. Their platforms had buckled. Hamayun got on to Capt Iftikhar, the adjutant. Within half an hour the repair team had put five guns in action. Their platforms were removed, repaired at night, and refitted before the next morning.

The senior armour unit fought a hard tank versus tank battle and steadily withdrew behind the first position by 2300 hours. Alauddin, Zia and Amin engaged targets aided by sound of battle, knowledge of ground and by instinct. At first light 6 December Indians attacked against first position. Flail tanks, covered by artillery fire started breeching the mine-field. Capt Alauddin reacted with medium shells. One tank was hit, the remainder withdrew. A platoon commander crawled within 50 yards of the tank with an RPG7. The round bounced off the tank. Horrified, the platoon commander hastened back to battalion headquarters. The battalion commander said, "Show me. Load one round". The round was loaded without removing the nose cap.

Maj Haroon and Capt Sohrab, observers, saw some enemy tanks in Khaira nullah. Own tanks had the first shots, then the artillery observers engaged the targets with guns from 12 Medium, 72 Medium and 33 Heavy Regiments. Enemy tanks did not reappear till 1530 hours 6 December when Alpha squadron had redeployed behind second position.

Throughout the battle Maj Haroon moved from squadron to squadron ensuring that the tanks never ran short of artillery support. The squadrons eagerly awaited Haroon's visits. In the heat of battle he came up with funny stories.

On evening 7 December the enemy tried breeching the minefield. Again Alpha squadron and Maj Latif (12 Medium) frustrated the enemy. During the night the gaps in the minefield were closed. On 8 December at 0445 hours Indians started shelling our positions. Our observers returned the ill-will. In a tank to tank engagement Charlie squadron shot up three Indian tanks in exchange for three of its own.

On 9 December Brig Nisar requested Maj Gen Abdul Ali Malik for a squadron of tanks to reinforce his depleted units. Gen Malik expressed his inability to comply. At last light Maj Haroon Rashid and Capt Sohrab reported Indian tanks in front of Harar Kalan and Khurd. The observer ploughed the area with everything he could get, which stung enemy artillery to respond with increased intensity. Immediately after last light 10 December enemy started preparatory bombardment. At 2200 hours enemy tanks cleared the minefield. At 0300 hours 11 December Brig Nisar ordered Changez Force to pull back behind main position.

Maj Yahya Effendi (Alpha squadron) received orders to withdraw from Loharan after last light 11 December. The route of withdrawal was at one place flanked by Barkhaniya forest, where the Indians had some T55 tanks and recoilless rifles. As Alpha squadron passed Barkhaniya they were hit by Indian tanks and recoilless rifles. The squadron lost two tanks; the remainder took hull down positions and traded

shots with the enemy. Fortunately Barkhaniya was a surveyed target. Capt Sohrab, forward observer, said to Yahya EfTendi, "We will give them something to talk about". Within minutes the jungle erupted with eighteen shells from 12 Medium Regiment and four from 33 Heavy. Sohrab continued to shower the area until Yahya's squadron had withdrawn to safety. Sohrab and Yahya were the last to move back.

Sohrab took his profession seriously. After 1971 war he left the army.

Brig Nisar had been ordered to delay enemy for 24 hours at first position, and 48 hours at second position. In actual fact the enemy was delayed for seven days. Nisar had to fight T55 and Centurion tanks with M47s and Shermans. Of course Changez force was gallantly and skillfully supported by 12 Medium, and 33 Heavy Regiments.

Independent Armoured Brigade Group was given the mission of destroying any enemy penetration along a front of approximately 180,000 yards from Phuklean in the north through Shakargarh-Narowal to Raya Khas in the south. The brigade was commanded by Brig Mohammad Ahmad who had won a Sitara-i-Jurat in a bold tank action in Sialkot in 1965. The group had two units equipped with M47 tanks, one with M48 tanks, an infantry battalion and 61 (SP) Field Regiment in direct support.

In addition to the above task the brigade was to join reserve division in any counter-attack launched by 1 Corps.

Brig Ahmad made approximately 25 counter-attack plans. However artillery commanders from 1 Corps and neighbouring divisions were neither consulted nor advised about these plans. This was to have unfortunate results as the battle unfolded.

On evening 11 December Indians flew photo reconnaissance missions over the area and correctly interpreted weak places. The minefield was breeched on night 13/14 December and Indian tanks and infantry established themselves in Jarpal. By morning 14 December Indian strength in Jarpal grew to an infantry brigade supported by a tank regiment.

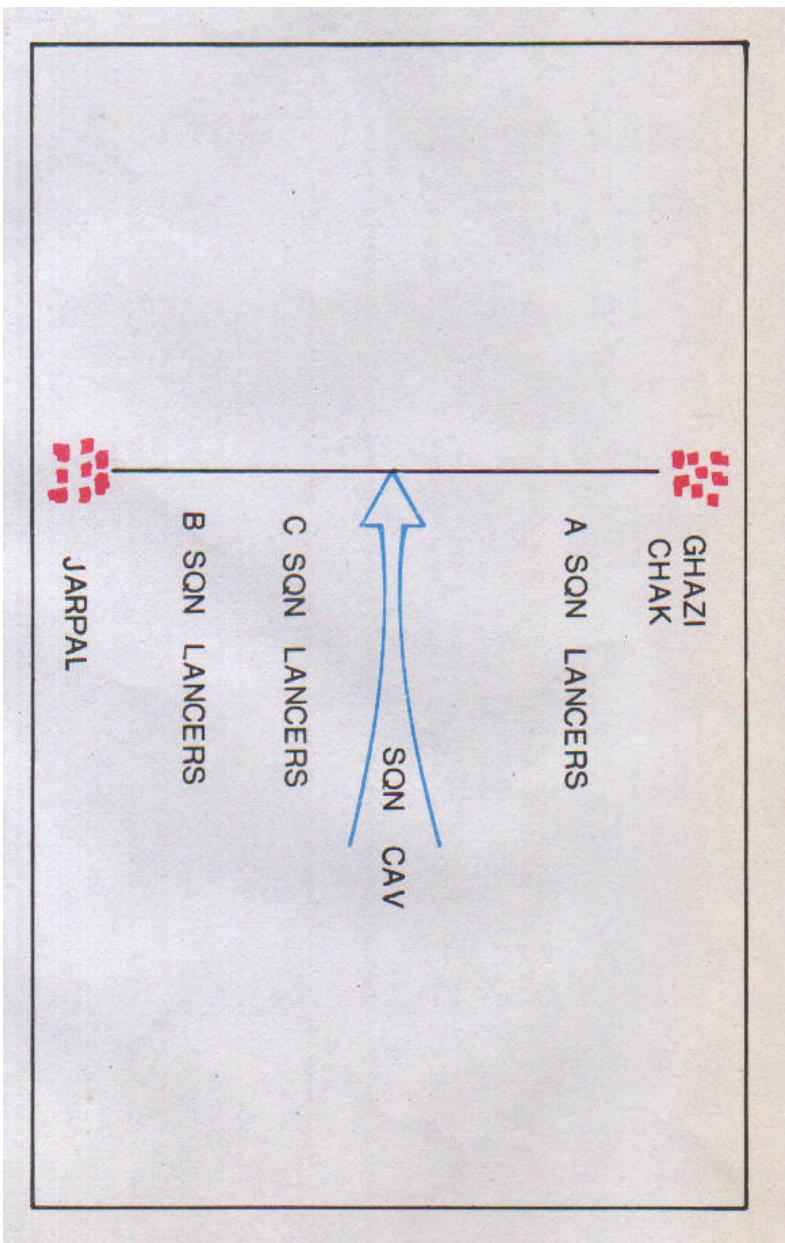
At 0500 hours 14 December Maj Ijaz Hussain Shah, Brigade Major armoured brigade, rang up Maj Mukeet second-in-command Lancers :—

"The enemy has breeched the last minefield. Brig Ahmad has gone to contact Brig Sher Ali Baz. Get your number one to Brig Baz's headquarters for orders. You move the regiment to Jarpal".

Maj Mohammad Amir (196 Battery 61 (SP) Field Regiment) accompanied Mukeet.

Lt Gen Irshad had ordered Brig Ahmad to "restore the situation with minimum force". Brig Baz volunteered the information that enemy strength consisted of a troop of tanks and approximately one infantry company. Indian positions were within range for sixteen of our batteries including six field, eight medium and two heavy batteries. But only 61 (SP) Field was used to support armoured brigade operation. Brig Ahmad gave out his orders for attack at 0500 hours 15

December. Lancers and a company of infantry were to attack enemy troops as soon as possible. Commanding officer 61 (SP) was not called to attend the orders. At 0700 hours Lt Col Masud (Lancers) gave out his orders; Alpha squadron to provide fire base from Jarpal, Bravo and Charlie to attack. At 0730 hours infantry brigade informed Lancers that Ghazi Chak and Skror Bund were being out-flanked by enemy. Alpha squadron was thereupon diverted to Ghazi Chak. Bravo and Charlie squadrons moved up for attack oblivious of change of orders to Alpha.



At 0800 hours as Alpha squadron approached Ghazi Chak they were hit by enemy hull down tanks. Three tanks were destroyed within a minute. The squadron halted, took hull down positions and tried to even the score. Bravo and Charlie squadrons were similarly hit by hull down enemy tanks. The squadron commanders lined up the tanks and ordered "Charge".

At 1100 hours the situation was as given in the sketch.

At 1000 hours Maj Amir (196 Battery) was called forward to join Lt Col Masud (Lancers). En route he was stopped by a risaldar who asked for fire on village Jarpal. There was some tank and small arms fire coming from the village. Amir, standing on top of the risaldar's tank engaged the target with his regiment. He was then directed to contact Lt Col Masud in Bara Pind. In a hut short of the village he found one of his observers and some jawans from Lancers lying. They were badly burned.

In Bara Pind Amir caught up with Col Masud. The area was littered with burning tanks and vehicles. Meanwhile Amir's tank arrived and he engaged Jarpal with as many guns as would respond. Alpha squadron reported that some shells were falling near their tanks. Masud ordered Amir to stop the fire. Amir then took his tank on a mound west of Bara Pind. From village Jarpal two Indian tanks and some infantry were advancing on Bara Pind. Amir brought his regiment on the target. The first salvo landed in middle of infantry. Amir then called, "Uniform target. 3 Rounds Gun fire". 61 (SP) and a battery 12 Medium responded. Both the enemy tanks

were hit. At 1530 hours while engaging another target Amir was wounded in the shoulder by a shell splinter ricochetting off a tree.

The second tank unit was ordered to attack between Alpha and Charlie squadrons (Lancers). By last light the regiments were left with six tanks each.

On 13 December Lt Col Akram Raja with his FF battalion found its way into 8 Division area. The battalion had left Quetta on 4 December. During the intervening period it had been passed from formation to formation. In Sialkot it had little respite, shuttling between Narowal and Raya Khas for 48 hours. At 0200 hours 16 December a staff officer from Brig Baz's brigade indicated the objective to Lt Col Saeed Janjua (46 Field). The attack was to go before first light. Lt Col Saeed Janjua hurriedly improvised a fire plan off the map. The manner in which the whole operation was put together invited disaster. The crossing of start line by FF and the timing of fire plan did not synchronise. In the middle of the night the forward observers could do nothing.

Maj Abdul Aziz (89 Battery) accompanied Lt Col Akram. Charlie company drew Lt Syed Shabbir as forward observer, and Delta company got Capt Nur-ul-Hassan. Lt Col Akram was given little time for reconnaissance, planning and preparation of attack. He tried to make up for the shortcoming by personally leading the attack. The battalion came under fire immediately after it crossed the start line. In the confusion few could distinguish friend from foe. Lt Col Akram Raja was cut down by machine gun fire. Lt Shabbir was wounded. The battalion lost 80 killed.

In middle September, 62 Field Regiment (Lt Col Raja Ghulam Mohammad) was engaged in annual practice camp on Pishin ranges. On 22 September it received orders to move to Sibi for an "Exercise" carrying its first line and two loads of second line ammunition. The regiment was equipped with 122 millimeter (Chinese) howitzers whose solid tyres were unsuited for operations in Sind. There were no spare tyres in Pakistan. In October it was decided by GHQ that the field regiments from 33 Division would be exchanged with those from 10 Division, the latter being equipped with 105 millimeter howitzers. Two weeks later the order was modified; the personnel were to remain with existing formation; only equipment was to be exchanged.

62 Field carried out another practice camp on 22 November with its 105 millimeter howitzers, at the end of which it moved to Rahim Yar Khan. The regiment was made part of a brigade group. On 2 December harbour and reconnaissance parties were ordered to Sahiwal by road. The main body was to move by rail. Reconnaissance parties reached Sahiwal by first light 3 December; only twelve hours away from war. By last light they were informed by Headquarters 2 Corps that the main body would be unloaded at Multan from where they were to proceed to Vehari. An officer was despatched to receive the main body at Multan. On the way he heard on radio about the outbreak of war. When he reached Multan by first light 4 December the trains had been unloaded and dispersal was in progress.

On evening 9 December 62 Field was ordered to move back to Sahiwal. In Headquarters 2 Corps Lt Col Ghulam

Mohammad received instructions to move to Sialkot, under command 8 Division. On

13 December the regiment was ordered to deploy near Nurkot. Two hours later the gun area was changed which also was cancelled and the regiment was ordered to go into a hide near Narowal. It reached Narowal by 0200 hours 14 December. Lt Col Ghulam Mohammad pleaded for his regiment to be given a chance in battle. Ultimately he contacted 78 Field and was given a gun area near Nurkot. The regiment reported ready at 2000 hours

14 December. Every one hoped that at last 62 Field would get to fire its guns in battle. But there were no calls, although within its range Brig Ahmad's brigade was fighting a desperate battle. By 17 December the gunners of 62 Field were frothing with frustration. At 1830 hours Lt Col Ghulam Mohammad ordered, "10 Rounds Gun Fire". The gunners barely managed to hold back their tears.

Lahore (Map No. 2)

4 Corps was essentially deployed for defence of Lahore. The divisions in defence were also assigned battalion size attack objectives, some 500 to 2000 yards inside Indian territory, which individually or collectively did not constitute overwhelming military advantage to either side.

Artillery 4 Corps was commanded by Brig Shams-ul-Haq Qazi. It had the following units:—

73 Medium

Lt Col Mehdi

82 Medium

Lt Col Baqir

35 Heavy

Lt Col Mushtaq Madni

36 Light Anti-Aircraft	Lt Col Ghulam Sawar Kakar
37 Corps Locating Regiment	Lt Col Sarwar

The guns of 36 Light Anti-Aircraft were distributed along the corps front in troops and sections. 37 Locating Regiment had a sound ranging base in support of each division.

Artillery 4 Corps set up two command posts :—

- a. Command Post I was located with Headquarters 4 Corps. It contained Brig Qazi, Lt Col Sarwar (37 Locating) and a staff officer. It functioned as a planning headquarters.
- b. Command Post II operated as fire control centre. When the war started the two command posts were combined into one.

In the north on extreme left of 10 Division a brigade was ordered to capture Fatehpur post, Bagh Khamo and Toti. 77 Field Regiment with under command 286 Mortar Battery was placed in direct support of the brigade. 77 Field was commanded by Lt Col Shaukat Wasti. The posts, a few hundred yards across the border, were captured without much trouble. On 4 December the Indians subjected own position to artillery bombardment. A mortar of 286 Battery received a direct hit. Capt Khalique (286 Battery), observer in Fatehpur, along with his technical assistant was killed.

On 6 December Charlie company (Baluch) was shelled and Indian tanks started working around its flanks. Lt Fateh

and 2/Lt Manzoor spotted some tanks near village Burj. They gave out the necessary fire orders and waited until the tanks reached near a surveyed target and then ordered "Fire". 77 Field Regiment and 286 Mortar Battery fired about 3000 rounds in response to calls for fire. 2/Lt Manzoor was killed while engaging hostile tanks. But the attack was repulsed. On 9 December Maj Shaft went to Dhussi Bund to collect signaller Abdul Aziz's body who had been killed on 6 December. At 1100 hours he went to Balol post. Dhussi Bund was under attack by Indian tanks. Maj Shaft immediately started engaging the tanks. Four were hit.

Some time later the position was over-run and Maj Shaft was killed.

The second brigade was to capture the following villages:—

a. Phase I

Pulkanjri by Punjab
Rani by Baluch

b. Phase II

Malakot by Frontier Force.

47 Field Regiment was placed in direct support of the brigade. In early November the regiment had exchanged its 105 millimeter howitzers for 122 millimeter Chinese equipment. It had no opportunity to fire with the new howitzers. On 30 November Maj Mohammad Rafiq was attending Gunnery Staff Course in Artillery School

Nowshera when he was ordered to report to 47 Field as its second-in-command. Rafiq reached the gun position at 0800 hours 1 December. An hour later Lt Col Latif, the commanding officer, walked into the command post, gave a marked map to Rafiq and ordered him to prepare a fire plan for support of brigade attack. The task tables were issued to fire units at 1400 hours 3 December. N/Sub Mohammad Iqbal was detailed as forward observer with Punjab. N/Sub Mohammad Zaman with Baluch and Capt M.A.L. Suri with FF.

The Punjab and Baluch were delayed in crossing the start line. The guns were not warned about the delay and the fire plan went off as scheduled. Both battalions ran into trouble by midnight. Maj Subah Sadiq (Punjab) was killed by machine gun fire. The forward observer, N/Sub Mohammad Iqbal, called for "Twenty five rounds gun fire \ The second-in-command was not so generous. Every time the observers called for "Twenty five rounds gun fire", Maj Rafiq scaled it down to ten. The fall of shells on objective guided and encouraged the infantry. At 1020 hours 4 December Pulkanjri was captured. N/Sub Mohammad Iqbal was awarded Imtiazi Sanad.

At 2330 hours 3 December the attack on Rani stalled about 800 yards short of the village. The forward observer, N/Sub Mohammad Zaman, was wounded in the shoulder but continued to bring fire on the enemy. Rani was captured by mid-day. N/Sub Mohammad Zaman was awarded Tamgha-i-Jurat. The attack on Malakot by FF set off at 2345 hours. The forward observer, Capt M.A.L. Suri was hit by a bullet.

But the officer had more important things to worry about. He continued in action until Malakot was captured.

The third brigade had the mission to capture area upon home bank of Upper Bari Doab Canal (UBDC). 18 Field was placed in direct support. Brig Shams-ul-Alam, Commander Artillery 10 Division, appreciating inadequacy of artillery support reinforced 18 Field with fires from 4 Field Regiment and 9 Medium Regiment (less battery). The brigade was commanded by Brig Sardar Shaukat Lodhi, a competent and soft spoken officer. He was in good company. Lt Col Iftikhar Gill was equally soft spoken—until he noticed sub-standard performance. Then his gunner vocabulary erupted unrestrained. Brig Lodhi's plan for attack was as follows:—

- a. Punjab, capture Kalsian and Khatra bridges.
- b. Baluch, capture China Bidi Chand.
- c. Baluch, capture Baba Pir post.

The operation was to be put through in two phases. H-hour for phase I was set for 1800 hours. 18 Field received warning order at 1510 hours 3 December. The fire plan had been finalised earlier that day. Task tables were issued to fire units at 1630 hours. Guns reported ready at 1715 hours. Lt Col Iftikhar Gill and Maj Nisar visited guns at 1730 hours.

The Punjab battalion had 41 Battery (Maj Mohammad Akram) in its direct support. N/Sub Majid and Capt Imran were forward observers with Alpha and Delta companies. At 1800 hours the fire plan went off. Alpha and Delta were delayed in crossing the start line. But there was little to worry about. As Capt Imran drove towards Delta company

his jeep over-turned damaging the wireless set. Imran ran, caught up with the company and used the infantry set to call for fire. By first light 4 December the battalion had secured its assigned objectives except Khalra bridge. On night 4/5 December the enemy blew up the bridge and withdrew east.

The Baluch battalion had the fire of 4 Field for support of its attack, as 18 Field guns were out of range of objective. However the battalion commander insisted in retaining officers affiliated from 18 Field Maj Javed Iqbal (42 Battery) accompanied the battalion commander and Capt Masud and Capt Safdar worked as forward observers. Alpha company was to capture Theh Khulla. The fire plan went off at 1800 hours and was repeated at 2130 hours. Alpha company had to cover 5 miles to make 2130 hours. The repeat bombardment turned out a lucky dip. Indians vacated the position long before Alpha company arrived on the scene. Maj Zulfiqar took Alpha company forward to Giplan. No fire plan had been prepared for this objective but Masud took impromptu shoots on suspicious features. Giplan was captured without opposition. Thereafter Alpha company advanced to UBDC and consolidated on home bank.

The second Baluch battalion had 40 Battery in its direct support. The battery was commanded by Maj Mohammad Riaz. Capt Asif Ali was forward observer. Delta company was to capture Baba Pir post. The fire plan went off as scheduled. The village was captured without opposition. By 0900 hours 4 December Delta company had secured far bank of UBDC.

Early morning 6 December 2/Lt Shafqat Ullah (41 Battery) pleaded with his battery commander, Maj Akram to be given a chance as observer. Shafqat had not been through the basic course and Akram hesitated. But the plea in Shafqat's eyes could not be resisted. He was sent to Kalesia bridge. With keenness of youth he glued his eyes to the binoculars, exposed to whosoever cared to spot him. At 1100 hours an enemy sniper could not resist the temptation. Shafqat was hit in the chest, was evacuated to hospital, and because of his enthusiasm for life recovered from the wound.

On night 7/8 December the Indians recaptured China Bidi Chand. The Baluch battalion and Charlie squadron Cavalry (Maj Daud) counter-attacked at 0500 hours 8 December, Maj Riaz and Capt Safdar Ali accompanied the force. Riaz went with the tanks. At 0500 hours Maj Daud took his eight Sherman tanks forward of Hudiara drain through Butcher Khana distributary upto village Marja. The leading tanks commanded by Lt Gilani entered the village at above 0600 hours without meeting opposition. In a mud house Gilani surprised fifteen Indian soldiers at their breakfast. The JCO admitted that they mistook the noise of tanks for their own squadron. Some time later the battalion joined up and started consolidating. At about 0630 hours Indian aircraft attacked the position. One tank was hit by a rocket. At 0700 hours Maj Daud left three tanks with infantry and withdrew the remainder four to Hudiara drain. After last light all the seven tanks were back in rear position.

At about mid-day 8 December Indian reaction against China Bidi started buifding up. The Baluch battalion was

subjected to artillery fire. Under cover of this fire Indian tanks closed in and started shooting up Baluch positions. Maj Riaz moved from position to position engaging enemy tanks. At 1500 hours a tank shell tore through him. There was very little left. Riaz was recommended for Nishan-i-Haider. After some time he was recognised with Sitara-i-Jurat.

Kasur (Map No. 2)

On 3 December Lt Col Khawaja Abdul Waheed. (operations officer Artillery 4 Corps) was visiting 73 Medium. At 1700 hours he was called back by Brig Shams-ul-Haq Qazi. He reached the command post by 1740 hours. Twenty minutes later Brig Mumtaz was due to attack the Indian salient west of Hussainiwala headworks. The fire plan for attack had been made by Brig Akhtar Abdul Rahman Commander Artillery 11 Division.

In late November Brig Mumtaz had made plans for the attack. The brigade had 45 Field Regiment in direct support. The regiment was commanded by Lt Col Asif Khurshid Afzal. Brig Mumtaz gave QUI his orders for attack at 1600 hours 3 December. At 1500 hours Lt Col Asif rang up 45 Field command post, "Warning order. Prepare to support brigade attack. I am on my way". At 1600 hours Maj Anwar, brigade major artillery, called and ordered units to collect task tables. A few minutes later Brig Akhtar Abdul Rahman rang up, "H-hour 1800 hours". Capt Aslam, adjutant, represented that the task tables had not been received in 45 Field. The H-hour was postponed to 1830 hours. At 1630

hours Col Asif arrived in 45 Field and gave out orders for support of attack :—

- a. Artillery support
 - (1) Direct support: 45 Field Regiment
 - (2) In support:
 - 22 Field Regiment
 - 59 Field Regiment
 - 66 Medium Regiment
 - 170 Mortar Battery
 - 256 Battery 73 Medium Regiment
 - 129 Battery 35 Heavy Regiment
- b. Authorised observer to go with Delta company 3 Punjab.
- c. Relay wireless station to be sent up at customs check post.

Maj Javed Saeed (168 Battery) accompanied Lt Col Ghulam Hussain (Punjab). Delta company had Capt Farid Ullah Shah for forward observer. The second observer Capt Id Mohammad followed Maj Saeed. Maj Bashir(169 Battery) accompanied Lt Col Habib Ahmad (Baluch). Lt Nawaz Afzal was forward observer with Bravo company and Capt Mumtaz Ahmad went with Delta company. Maj Jamil (64 Battery) accompanied commanding officer Punjab. Capt Sharif and Lt Majeed joined their companies as forward observers.

Preparatory bombardment started at 1815 hours. Delta company Punjab crossed the start line at 1830 hours. The objective was about 1400 yards away. Only the dark silhouettes of trees were visible against the sky. Suddenly the silhouettes came alive with tongues of flame followed by angry buzz of bullets and deep growls of artillery shells. At 1900 hours 45 Field command post lost touch with Maj Javed Saeed. Lt Col Ghulam Hussain was killed by a burst of machine gun bullets. A shell landed near Maj Javed Saeed seriously wounding him and Naik Sher Khan. Technical assistant Mohammad Ashraf and signaller Fida Hussain were killed. When Delta company was about 200 yards from objective Capt Farid Ullah Shah was wounded in the stomach. L/Hav Fazal Dad and Naik Barkat from his party were killed.

At 2130 hours Brig Mumtaz and Col Asif drove forward to the customs post. Col Asif established his post on a bund and started engaging the area ahead of Perimeter Garden with division artillery concentrations. Some times later Delta company reported capture of objective.

ATTACK PLAN



Bravo company Baluch battalion crossed start line at 1830 hours. Alpha company was delayed for 15 minutes. Within a few minutes after crossing start line the companies lost touch with the commanding officer, Lt Col Habib Ahmad. At 1900 hours Maj Bashir (169 Battery) was out of communications with the forward observers. At about 2100 hours Lt Col Habib and Maj Bashir went forward to Alpha company. By mid-night the situation was confused. Own and enemy troops fought from trench to trench on the objective. At the same time artillery from both sides joined in. The tall elephant grass caught fire and the billowing smoke blotted out moonlight. Habib and Bashir were moving from trench to trench when a shell landed nearby. Bashir was wounded in the stomach, his technical assistant Naik Manzoor in the shoulder.

Bravo company advanced towards Qaiser-e-Hind with Kasur-Ferozepur road on its right. About 200 yards short of objective Lt Nawaz Afzal (forward observer) caught two Indian soldiers. A moment later he was hit by a grenade. His signaller L/Nk Dost Mohammad dealt with the enemy grenadier and was himself hit in the shoulder by a bullet. Dost Mohammad carried Lt Nawaz to the nearest trench. The officer was posthumously awarded Sitara-i-Jurat. By first light a troop of own tanks moved forward and dealt with an Indian observer who had continued in his post even after our capture of Qaiser-e-Hind.

Alpha company Baluch battalion (Maj Hanif) had the mission of capturing Dipalpur canal bridge. Capt Mumtaz Ahmad was its forward observer. As soon as the leading

troops crossed into Indian territory they ran into some mines. It took the company some time to get round the obstacle. The Indian* must have anticipated this move because at thi precise moment Alpha company was greeted by shel bursts. Maj Hanif was seriously wounded. Capt Mumtaz carried him to the nearest bunker whei Hanif died. Mumtaz then took charge of the company headquarters and proceeded towards the objective. The bridge was captured by about a hour before first light. While consolidating on the objective a shell landed near Mumtaz damaging his wireless set.

Delta company (Maj Mubarik) was ordered to capture Shainke post. N/Sub Allah Ditta accompanied as forward observer. The attack was preceded by a short preparatory bombardment. There was no resistance.

At 1615 hours 3 December Maj Jamil Ahmad (64 Battery, 22 Field Regiment) received a call from commanding officer Punjab. "Prepare for attack. H-hour 1800 hours". The battalion had been transferred from flanking brigade for the attack on Indian enclave west of Sutlej. Jamil ordered the observers to their companies and himself proceeded to brigade headquarters to get into the picture. At 1740 hours he drove to the forming up place and found two companies of Punjab recovering from a forced march of 10 miles. At 1630 hours 22 Field Regiment received orders to move into its gun position to support brigade attack. The positions had been prepared in middle November The regiment reported ready at 1835 hours. In the meantime relevant portions of task table were received by telephone and gun data worked

out during the interval of repositioning the guns. The regiment missed only the first five serials of the fire plan.

Delta company Punjab had the embankment east of railway line for its objective. Capt Abdul Majeed was its forward observer. The company had little difficulty in capturing the objective.

Alpha company was less fortunate. It was to capture an embankment running north from Qaiser-e-Hind. Capt Mohammad Sharif was the forward observer. The company was half way towards its objective when enemy machine guns opened up. Sharif and his signaller were hit and rolled down the embankment. Capt Abdul Majeed saw enemy machine guns and promptly engaged them with regiment fire. Alpha company was enabled to capture its objective.

Synchronised with brigade attack, 258 Battery 73 Medium Regiment and 130 Battery 35 Heavy Regiment bombarded Ferozepur airfield and ammunition depot.

Kanganpur (Map No 2)

70 Field Regiment was the Artillery School regiment, It was commanded by Lt Col Latif Awan. On 26 November it moved to Haripur as part of division artillery. On 2 December the units received warning order from headquarters artillery. "One field officer with a 3/4 ton vehicle rendezvous at headquarters artillery at 0600 hours 3 December". The GSO-2 (intelligence and counter bombardment) was incharge of the party. Immediately

before departure the unit representatives were informed, "Move towards Gujranwala". Past Taxila the convoy was halted and maps were issued. They were ordered to move towards Dipalpur, by-passing Lahore.

At 2000 hours the party reached Bhai Pheru and learned that India and Pakistan were at war. There was little conversation from then on. The convoy reached Dipalpur at 0100 hours 4 December. By 1700 hours the guns caught up with advance party. At 0400 hours 5 December Brig Jahan Dad, Commander Artillery, ordered 70 Field to deploy in support of Kanganpur. The regiment occupied positions after last light 6" December with batteries positioned six to seven miles apart. At least one battery was split into two bits in order to cover the frontage of supported battalion.

The brigade had three infantry battalions and 173 Engineer Road Construction Battalion. The latter was hastily withdrawn from Kara Koram Highway. It was commanded by Lt Col Masud. The battalion volunteered to capture a couple of Indian posts. 247 Battery was repositioned to support the attack. At 1700 hours 15 December the battery fired on the objective for 15 minutes. Immediately afterwards Capt Hamid led the assault of his engineers. The company lost seven killed and six wounded but overran the post in a spirited rush. Capt Hamid was awarded Sitara-i-Jurat.

On 24 December 70 Field moved to Bahawalnagar and 86 Field took over support of Kanganpur. Lt Col Aziz-ur-Rauf received orders on 1 December for raising of 86 Field

Regiment in Nowshera. The unit was initially earmarked for East Pakistan and was to be equipped with 105 millimeter (Italian) howitzers. Rauf collected the guns from Rawalpindi and scrounged some officers and men from Artillery School and Artillery Centre. But the unit was woefully short of vehicle spares and miscellaneous stores Rauf drove to Kissa Khawani Bazar in Peshawar. Using a bull horn he appealed, "O' patriots of this historic city . . Within minutes his jeep was loaded with all kinds of things and there was a lot more he could not carry. Two truckers readily came forward and brought the equipment to Nowshera. On 17 December the regiment carried out its calibration and course shooting. On 18 December it moved to Rawalpindi and on 24 December relieved 70 Field in support of Kanganpur.

On night 2/3 January 1972 the Indians attacked village Jhangar and 86 Field got a chance to fire its guns. 343 Battery had been repositioned to support 173 Engineer Battalion in Jhangar. Capt Nazir Ahmed was forward observer. An Indian spoiling attack was repulsed and 173 Engineer Battalion went and captured two Indian strong points.

The AK Battalion had a company position across Sutlej river at Nathalke. On night 3/4 January Indian Infantry crept through the elephant grass and started engaging own positions with small arms. Capt Javed Amin, forward observer, brought artillery fire close within two hundred yards of his post. Lt Kaul (Indian artillery observer) was among the wounded. The company of Infantry was withdrawn to home bank.

Sulemanki (Map No. 2)

In Sulemanki 76 Field Regiment was placed in direct support of the formation. The regiment was commanded by Lt Col Faqir Gul Khattak. 90 Mortar Battery and a Mujahid battery equipped with 85 millimeter Chinese guns were placed under command 76 Field. 81 Medium Regiment was deployed in support of the formation. In order to cover the brigade front three positions per battery were prepared and the batteries of 76 Field were dispersed over a 6000 yards front. At 1500 hours 3 December 76 Field received warning orders for attack. "H-hour 1800 hours". The brigade was to capture some posts on far side of Subhuna canal by "infiltration". There was no clear cut or standard interpretation of this

term. Nevertheless, during peace time discussion and exercises, a complete formation with tanks, guns and vehicles managed to infiltrate through enemy position and captured objectives deep in enemy rear. During the 1971 war the infiltration stopped well short of enemy weapons.

Alpha company FF (Maj Shabbir Sharif) was to capture Gurnukhera embankment on far side of Subhuna canal. Lt Hassan Mahmood accompanied as forward observer. About 300 yards short of canal Alpha company came under small arms fire. The observer fired on pre-planned targets and to his horror saw that the maps were out by approximately 600 yards. Hassan Mahmood ran upto a vantage point out and adjusted the fires of two batteries, and ordered, "HE and white phosphorous". After about ten minutes enemy fire subsided and Alpha company captured the objective. At

0500 hours 4 December enemy shelled Alpha company. A shell landed near Lt Hassan Mahmood knocking him unconscious. The observer was evacuated and replaced by N/Sub Nazir Ahmad.

On 2 December 115 Battery 30 Heavy Regiment (155 millimeter guns) were exchanged with 128 Battery 34 Heavy Regiment (8 inch howitzers). Next day 34 Heavy less 128 Battery was ordered to move by train to Arifwala on way to Bahawalnagar. On 3 December 81 Medium, 30 Heavy and 75 Light Anti-Aircraft (units of Artillery 2 Corps) left Okara for Sulemanki. The units were in action by 0400 hours 4 December.

At 1700 hours 3 December Capt Ramzan Mirza was called by his battery commander to Baluch headquarters. Ramzan arrived at 1730 hours and received orders in a breathless torrent :—

"You have to go as forward observer with Charlie company which will be leading the attack. The company has already moved forward. If you run you might just catch it before start line. Khuda Hafiz".

Ramzan, still wearing Ranger's uniform, ran followed by his observer party. Their run was accelerated by sounds of own artillery firing opening salvos. Fifteen minutes later they reached the start line. There was no sign of Charlie company. Ramzan murmured a hasty prayer and followed the direction of his nose. Ten minutes later he caught up with Baluch. At 0030 hours 4 December Lt Col Mohammad Jamal decided to send a reconnaissance patrol to Subhuna canal. On its return the battalion resumed advance. About

200 yards short of Subhuna canal they were subjected to small arms and artillery fire. Capt Ramzan called for fire on pre-planned targets. "Repeat". Thereafter the Baluch crossed over Subhuna canal and consolidated. Capt Zahid Raheem accompanied Alpha company.

On 5 December Indian M1G 21 attacked 76 Field gun position. L/Hav Sher Mohammad using his machine gun from standing position engaged the plane. There was a trail of smoke. The pilot baled out and was captured.

During night 4/5 December Alpha company FF was reinforced by another company who brought Capt Daud-ur-Rehman as forward observer. During one of the counter attacks enemy tanks reached within 400 yards of own positions. Daud decided to risk using 8 inch howitzers. The 200 pound shells stunned our own troops. But they landed not far from the tanks. The second salvo landed on target. On 6 December Indians attacked Alpha company FF. The company was subjected to prolonged artillery fire under whose cover Indian tanks approached within 800 yards of own positions. Capt Daud shouted, "Target Mike 3056. Fire". Again the mixture of medium and heavy shells more than shook the tanks. The company commander Maj Shabbir Sharif moved from platoon to platoon oblivious of enemy fire. He was killed by a tank shell. Shabbir was awarded Nishan-i-Haider. Daud received Tamgha-i-Jurat.

The Punjab battalion was given the mission to capture 'Pukka' position on far side of Subhuna canal. Capt Habibullah accompanied the attacking troops as forward observer.

About 500 yards short of objective they were fired upon by Indian tanks. Habib-ullah responded with a medium battery. The tanks were not hit but they turned back. The infantry resumed advance. Habib-ullah kept the objective under fire until own troops were only 200 yards short of it. Then with relief he ordered, "Add 200". At least one enemy tank was disabled.

2 Corps

2 Corps was GHQ striking force. From 3 December till after cease fire artillery units of this formation remained mostly on the move. A few were moved over to Sulemanki, Kanganpur and Bahawalnagar to support brigades committed in extended defence. By 9 December 2 Corps had been fragmented and was in poor condition to strike deep into Indian territory.

The odyssey of 34 Heavy is illustrative of the manner in which the fire power of 2 Corps was frittered away. Gun group of 34 Heavy started from Wasawe Wala at 0300 hours 4 December. At 0430 hours Maj Saadullah Jan, second-in-command, who was waiting for the 34 Heavy train saw another train coming from Karachi into the siding meant for the artillery regiment. The train was carrying 45 Baluch. Maj Saadullah ran and signalled the driver to stop. The driver missed the signal but the guard applied emergency brakes and stopped the train. Meanwhile the train with 34 Heavy rolled in, and into the stationary 45 Baluch train. Eight soldiers were killed. Fortunately there was no damage to guns. Brig R G L G Badshah (Artillery 2 Corps) arrived on

the scene within the hour and with the help of local population managed to clear up the mess.

34 Heavy remained in Arifwala till 7 December. At 1700 hours it received orders from Chief of Staff 2 Corps to move forward. Half an hour later GSO-1 from Artillery 2 Corps amended the order to "Reconnaissance parties only." At 2100 hours the regiment was ordered to move lock, stock and barrel. Finally, reconnaissance parties moved at 2300 hours and the remainder at mid-night 7/8 December. Six guns got bogged in Sutlej river. The remainder of the regiment reached Chak Hatiana at 0345 hours.

On night 16 December units of Artillery, 2 Corps less 30 Heavy Regiment were ordered to concentrate. The concentration was completed by 0230 hours 17 December. It was the end of war.

18 Division (Map No. 2)

18 Division had the mission to defend Karachi sector. In November it was given additional mission "Capture Jaisalmer". The division was commanded by Maj Gen B. M. Mustafa. Brig Atique Ahmad was commander artillery. Gen Mustafa's plan in brief was as follows :—

- a. Senior brigade, with : Capture Ramgarh and
under command Cavalry Jaisalmir while masking
and 7 Field Regiment Longane Wala
In support 65 Medium
Regiment less battery

- b. Second brigade, with : Capture Longane
under command Wala
79 Field Regiment In
support 65 Medium
Regiment less battery
- c. Leading elements first brigade cross international boundary at 0200 hours 4 December. No move before last light 3 December.

Sub para b above meant a move of 61 miles, 40 of which were over uncertain dirt tracks and 20 miles over soft sands, during eight hours of darkness. The brigade major artillery pointed out to Brig Atique the difficulty of the move and suggested artillery units move forward to edge of desert a night earlier. Atique ordered the move on own responsibility.

The troops had not been permitted reconnaissance of areas close to the border. During 1969-70 Artillery 18 Division carried existing survey forward to border areas in some places. The keenness was not appreciated. Artillery units had not been issued maps of area across the border. No effort had been made to carry out photographic reconnaissance. The division was committed to 70 miles advance into hostile territory, over open desert, without adequate information and without guaranteed air cover.

On 2 December Maj Safdar brought a handwritten letter from Director of Military Operations laying down night 3/4 December as D-Day for crossing the

international border. H-hour was to be indicated by GOC 18 Division. This was fixed for 2130 hours 3 December and

conveyed in writing to Director of Military Operations through Maj Safdar. General Headquarters had imposed the restriction "No move before last light 3 December". General Mustafa spoke to Vice Chief of the General Staff (Maj Gen Anwar Qureshi) and requested postponement of H-hour. The request was turned down. Later Gen Mustafa spoke to Gen Hamid who agreed to postponement as long as the H-hour remained within the limits of night 3/4 December.

Gen Mustafa and Brig Atique arrived in Gabbar at 2200 hours 3 December. Checking on the progress of move of units it became clear to Gen Mustafa that there was little likelihood of making the dead-line of night 3/4 December. He therefore postponed the operation for 24 hours.

7 Field arrived in Gabbar by 1600 hours 3 December. 79 Field Regiment arrived in Gabbar at 0600 hours 4 December and was ordered to make Masit Wari Bhit by 2330 hours same night. The restrictions on reconnaissance and the absence of air photos or reliable maps led to orders which were rather removed from surface conditions. The perversity of terrain was a shock to almost every one. Only ten guns of 79 Field made Masit Wari by 0115 hours 5 December. 65 Medium reached Masit Wari at 2100 hours 4 December. At 2300 hours 240 Battery fired a 'sweep and search' mission over Longane Wala for 15 minutes.

The tank unit reached Masit Wari at 2330 hours 4 December. Here the regiment replenished and picked up Baluch battalion. The second battalion, was being ferried in trailers towed by agricultural tractors whose cross-country

hobbling drove many a good soldier to tears. Most of the time the troops were hauling the tractors out of sand rather than the other way round. During the move from Gabbar to Masit Wari tanks had to haul out some guns bogged in the soft sand.

7 Field Regiment had affiliated its batteries to Brig Tariq's brigade as follows :—

11 Battery Direct support EBR

15 Battery Direct support R & S task force

44 Battery Direct support Punjab

The R & S task force had the mission to reconnoitre forward to Jaisalmer. Indeed it disappeared.

The tank unit crossed the international border at 0100 hours 5 December. Maj Rafiq (11 Battery) and his observers rode jeeps in the wake of tanks. BC 44 Battery and his observers remained with Punjab in Masit Wari. The leading tanks hit road Longane Wala—Ghotran at 0330 hours. Here the commanding officers of armoured unit and Baluch decided to reduce Longane Wala before going for Ramgarh. According to original plan the brigade was to mask Longane Wala, which was to be captured by second brigade.

At 0445 hours 5 December Alpha squadron contacted enemy defences. At 0625 hours the tank squadrons encircled enemy positions. At 0715 hours Bravo squadron and Bravo company Baluch formed up for attack. Hitherto enemy weapons which had come to life consisted of some four machine guns and four anti-tank guns.

In view of the difficulties of terrain Brig Tariq Mir had ordered the guns to remain in Masit Wari Bhit. The R & S task force having disappeared 15 Battery joined up with 79 Field Regiment. Longane Wala could be engaged only by the guns of 65 Medium. But the observers of 7 Field had no communications with 65 Medium.

At 0720 hours six Indian aircraft attacked own troops. Five tanks were hit. 15 Battery was started but the guns were unhurt. Within half an hour Lt Col Akram Syed lined up the tanks for the second time which were again hit by hostile aircraft. At 0830 hours Gen Mustafa landed in his helicopter in the midst of tanks. He went round the troops and then flew off. At 0930 hours the tanks readied for the third time. At this stage Brig Tariq Mir called off the attack. Enemy air attacks continued till 1600 hours. A total of seventeen tanks were lost. The artillery units received their share of ill-will. 79 Field lost a few gun-towing vehicles. 65 Medium lost two guns and eight vehicles. The second infantry brigade occupied intermediate position forward of Masit Wari on morning 7 December. On night 8/9 December the brigade was ordered to occupy position in Gabbar. Brig Tariq Mir's brigade was established in Masit Wari.

311 Independent Light Anti-Aircraft Battery was raised on 30 November by Anti-Aircraft Artillery School at Malir. Two days later the battery joined 18 Division. On 3 December N/Sub Mohammad Sadiq took four 40 millimeter guns to Gabbar and to Masit Wari to join 65 Medium. The move from Gabbar to Masit Wari proved too much for the vintage gun-towing vehicles. 65 Medium had to help out; even then only three guns made destination.

Between 5 and 7 December the guns fought off fourteen raids. On 5 December Hav Yaqub's gun hit an SU7. At 1600 hours 7 December two hostile aircraft attacked the gun position in Masit Wari. Hav Yaqub took on the aircraft. But the manually operated gun could not cope with two attacking aircraft. The first raider missed the gun, the second did not. N/Sub Sadiq, Hav Yaqub and L/Hav Shah Wali were wounded. Nevertheless the gun kept on firing until the enemy flew away.

On evening 9 December Gen Mustafa ordered withdrawal to area Gabbar. As a result of enemy air action the artillery regiments had lost a number of gun-towing vehicles. 79 Field lost eight gun-towing vehicles and four guns. Only eight guns could be moved at a time. By 0230 hours 10 December fourteen guns had been ferried back. At 0230 hours the regiment was ordered to move another fifteen miles towards the rear, and at 1400 hours to move to Goth Gutmal. By mid-night 10 December only seven guns had made the place. Two guns were recovered from enemy territory during night 10 December by Lt Col Azam commanding officer 79 Field. On 10 December at 1600 hours two Indian aircraft approached the gun position. There were some tanks deployed ahead of the guns. The aircraft turned their attention towards the tanks. The tank commanders opened their cupolas, watched the approaching aircraft and moved towards the enemy. The moment the hostile aircraft dived the tanks made a 90 degree turn and hastened off. Enemy rockets hit the ground. The aircraft

made four more passes with tanks repeating the manoeuvre. Thereafter the enemy flew away dipping their wings.

At 2300 hours 9 December Lt Munawar, GPO 240 Battery (65 Medium) pulled out three of his guns from Masit Wari to move to Gabbar. The fourth gun tower would not budge. Munawar ordered his assistant, 2/Lt Javaid, to take the three guns back, leave one of them half-way and send the vehicle for the fourth gun. 2/Lt Javaid unhooked number 3 gun about 5000 yards short of Gabbar post and sent its vehicles to Lt Munawar. Number 3 gun was to cause trouble. Munawar brought the fourth gun into Gabbar by 0400 hours 10 December. In the meantime our engineers closed the minefield gap and number 3 gun was stranded 3000 yards the wrong side of the mines. During night 10 December Lt Col Iftikhar (65 Medium) brought number 3 gun to join the regiment.

On 13 December 40 Field was deployed in direct support of Chhor. Lt Col Raja Mansoor Ahmad (26 Field) drove to brigade headquarters to get some action for his regiment. En route Mansoor was stopped by Brig Mahmood and ordered to deploy 26 Field five miles short of Chhor, reinforcing 40 Field. By 1430 hours the regiment was ready to fire. On 15 December at 1305 hours 26 Field fired ten rounds per gun. After eleven days of frustrating moves 85 Medium (less battery) was in action at 0130 hours 14 December. During the next forty-eight hours it fired 400 rounds, presumably in anger.

Anti-Aircraft Artillery

In 1971 anti-aircraft artillery resources consisted of the following :—

- a. 3 Anti-Aircraft Brigade, responsible for defence of Pakistan Air Force installations and Naval Dockyard at Karachi.
- b. Anti-Aircraft units organic to field formations.
- c. Anti-Airc/aft Mujahid companies under command logistic areas, used for tasks other than in 'a' and 'b' above.

Anti-Aircraft resources were inadequate for the number of installations whose security was necessary to the successful prosecution of war. The air installations, quite rightly, received the highest priority. Next came Naval dockyards and some important bridges. The oil installations and railway remained largely unprotected. Some were given Mujahid sub-units whose equipment was defective and whose personnel were mildewed ex-servicemen. From 4 December onwards Indian air attacks were focused on railway engines and oil installations. By 14 December the situation in both respects was grim.

The anti-aircraft units had mixture of British, American and Chinese equipment. Most of the equipment was of World War II vintage.

Peshawar Air Base

On 4 December at 0700 hours two enemy Hunters made low level attack. Both the aircraft were shot down by PAF. The second raid came at 1100 hours. A 40 millimeter gun commanded by Hav Mohammad Hussain (300 Battery) had a stoppage. An enemy Hunter turned its attention on the gun.

Hav Mohammad Hussain calmly rectified the fault and was ready when the Hunter turned for its second run. Mohammad Hussain and three of his team were wounded. But they continued to fire. The enemy aircraft faltered, sputtered smoke and hit the ground near Bara. Air Marshal Rahim, Commander-in-Chief Air, complimented the team with Tamgha-i-Jurat for each member.

Mianwali Air Base

On 4 December enemy raided the base at 0210 hours, and 0540 hours. Only one Canberra was involved in each raid. The base was defended by 51 and 301 batteries of 20 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. The guns opened up, the raider dropped its bombs but neither side drew any blood. At 1700 hours two Hunters made low level attack and in face of anti-aircraft fire dropped their loads outside the perimeter killing two clerks of 20 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. On 5 December two Hunters attacked at 1400 hours. One raider was caught in Anti-aircraft fire and exploded in the air. At 1838 hours a Canberra appeared, was winged and flew back. On 6 December single bombers raided the base at 0010 hours, 0115 hours and 0240 hours. There was no damage on either side.

Murid Air Base

On 8 December five of our own aircraft were lined up for take off when caught by a low level enemy attack. There had been no early warning and the hostile aircraft got away with a score of five.

Sargodha Air Base

The first raid came at 2335 hours 3 December. During the four nights from 3 to 6 December Sargodha was attacked 28 times. Nevertheless the base remained operative throughout the war.

At 1700 hours 3 December 2/Lt Abbas Bokhari, troop commander 12 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment) came out of the battery command post. At that time our aircraft were in the process of taking off. An hour later the aircraft returned to base and taxied into their pens. At 1900 hours Abbas received orders, "Guns high and tight". The order implied that guns were to be loaded and ready to fire but not to fire unless given the order 'Guns free'. Abbas's troop consisted of two 37 millimeter (twin) and two 14.5 millimeter (quadruple) guns. The guns were not equipped with night firing devices. But Lt Col Shuja Haider (5 Light Anti-Aircraft) had positioned the guns to fire over the main runway at an elevation of 30 degrees. Col Shuja, along with Lt Naveed Anwar, had positioned himself on top of killer control tower. From this precarious but vantage point he controlled the fire of his regiment.

At midnight 3 December warning of hostile aircraft was received along with the order 'Guns free'. Five minutes later the sound of approaching aircraft came over the airfield. The guns fired a barrage. The Indian aircraft ran the gauntlet and dropped their bombs. A thousand pounder bomb landed near the runway but not near enough to do any damage. Two enemy aircraft were hit. There were three more raids that night. The first two raids were low level and the last two

high level, which gave a chance to 52 Heavy Anti-Aircraft to fire its guns. One SU 7 was hit.

During night 5 December 2/Lt Abbas manned a 37 millimeter gun and Lt Rabbani got on a 14.5 millimeter (quadruple). Throughout the night enemy raids continued. There were two casualties ; a flight lieutenant and a national service cadet were killed. The following gunners were complimented with gallantry awards:—

Tamgha-i-Jurat

Hav Ah' Mohammad	) 5 Light Anti-
Hav Noor Mohammad	) Aircraft
Hav Mohammad Rafiq	) Regiment
Hav Mohammad Siddique)
Nk Mohammad Aslam)
Nk Talib Hussain)	
N/Sub Mohammad Iqbal	) 52 Heavy Anti-
Hav Mohammad Afsar	) Aircraft
Hav Mohammad Fazil	) Regiment

Badin Air Base

Between February and December 1971 the batteries of 58 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment were shuffled eight times between Badin, Malir and Pir Patho. Finally the regiment started the war with two batteries in Badin and two in Jacobabad.

From 4 December to 13 December Badin was attacked eight times by a mixture of Hunters, Gnats and MIG-21 aircraft. The unit claimed five kills. The following were awarded Tarngha-i-Jurat :—

Hav Talib Hussain

Nk Mohammad Idris

Mujahid Langar Khan

Masroor Air Base and Naval Dockyard

The two places were defended by fire units of 41 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, 74 Composite Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment and 310 Independent Light Anti-Aircraft Battery. There were fifteen raids from 3 to 15 December, thirteen of them during hours of darkness. Neither the air-base nor the dockyard were rendered non-operational at any time. On 8 December Indian missile boats attacked own Navy. Some of the missiles hit our oil tanks on East Wharf. At about the same time Indian aircraft attacked the area which led to some confusion about the author of attack.

On 4 December the base came under hostile attack. As the guns started firing, the Sector Control ordered "Guns hold fire". Own aircraft were chasing the raiders. Some of the guns continued to fire. Sig Mohammad Aslam (74 Composite Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment) appreciating the danger to friendly aircraft ran out of the command post to warn the guns. He was severely wounded but managed to stop the fire before he collapsed. Aslam died in hospital and was posthumously awarded Sitara-i-Jurat.

Jacobabad, Kalar Kahar, Shorkot, Sakesar

Anti-Aircraft cover was provided as follows :—

Jacobabad	Two batteries 58 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment
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Kalar Kahar	33 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery (13 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment)
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Shorkot	264 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery (75 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment)
Sakesar	53 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery (20 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment)

There was little activity over Jacobabad and Kalar Kahar. On Shorkot there were two raids. The battery claimed three kills. The following from 75 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment received gallantry awards:—

Tamgha-i-Jurat

Hav Sarsa Khan

Hav Mohammad Bashir

L/Hav Mohammad Amir

Gnr Mohammad Arif

Imtiazi Sanad

Maj Sunawar Khan

Hav Amir Khan

Nk Abdul Rehman

L/Nk Mohammad Yasin

Gnr Mahmood Ahmad

Sakesar received two raids, one on 4 December and the second on 5 December, each involving two Hunters. The unit claimed to have hit all the four offending aircraft.

NOT THE LAST WORD

In 1948 when one of our mountain guns was damaged by hostile shelling the detachment wept. In 1971 a lonely gun opposite Agartalla was surrounded by Indian infantry. When the gun commander Hav Yasin was called upon to surrender he answered with "Load. Fire. Ya Ali" When the enemy eventually got to the gun Hav Yasin, L/Nk Ehsan and Gunner Aziz were lying dead, their bullet splintered bodies draping the breech and trails of their gun. The gallantry of these gunners was not even mentioned in Eastern Command despatches. A chivalrous enemy commander saluted the gunners and complimented them with appropriate military ceremony.

The reaction of Hav Yasin to call for surrender epitomises the training of artillerymen.

For good or for evil, according to our profession, an act is consecrated into tradition through its recognition and repetition. But irrespective of our profession, tradition is a privilege as much as a responsibility. The two are coterminous. Privilege without responsibility is licence. Responsibility without privilege is lower than slavery; and neither attitude obtains proud tradition.

Finally a war is fought to be won.

A prize fighter is groomed for championship through a series of victories. As his skill improves the quality of his opponents is accordingly raised. If he is pitched against overwhelming odds in the first three bouts his fighting career comes to an end.

In 1948 Pakistan Army fought against an enemy who was better equipped, better organised and larger in numbers. In

1965 the odds in respect of organisation and numbers were in favour of the enemy. We had an edge in respect of equipment and training. In 1971, while neck deep in the quagmire of civil war, the Army was hurled against an enemy better equipped, better organised, better trained and larger in numbers.

And to crown everything we seemed to have no national objective except a cease fire.

This of course is by no means the last word. The purpose of this book is to look into our past, I hope without fear and without favour, so that we can look into our future without fear and without favour.

INSHA-ALLAH.

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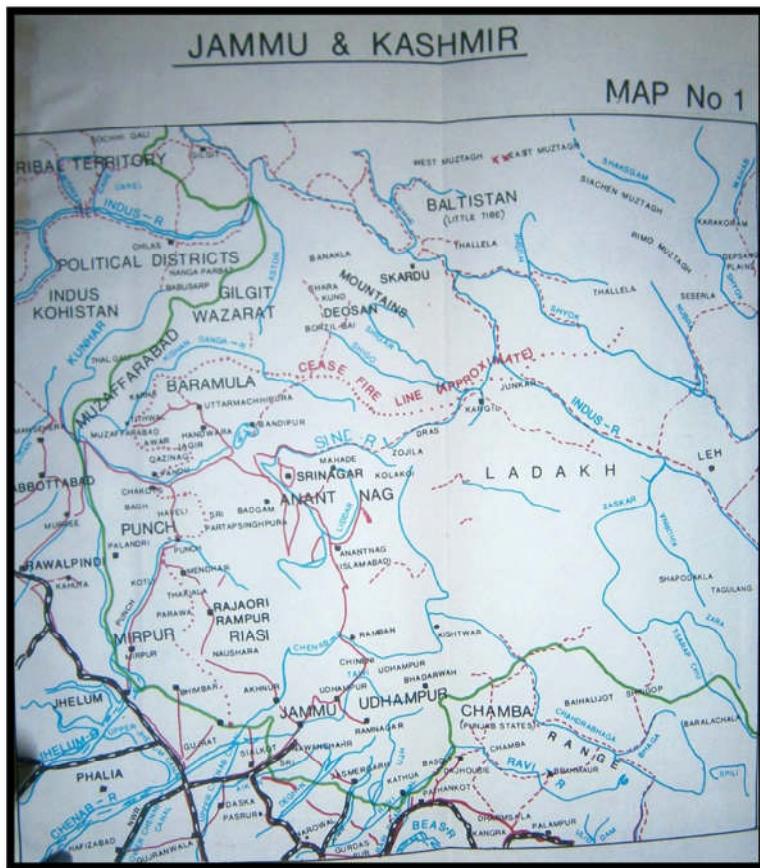
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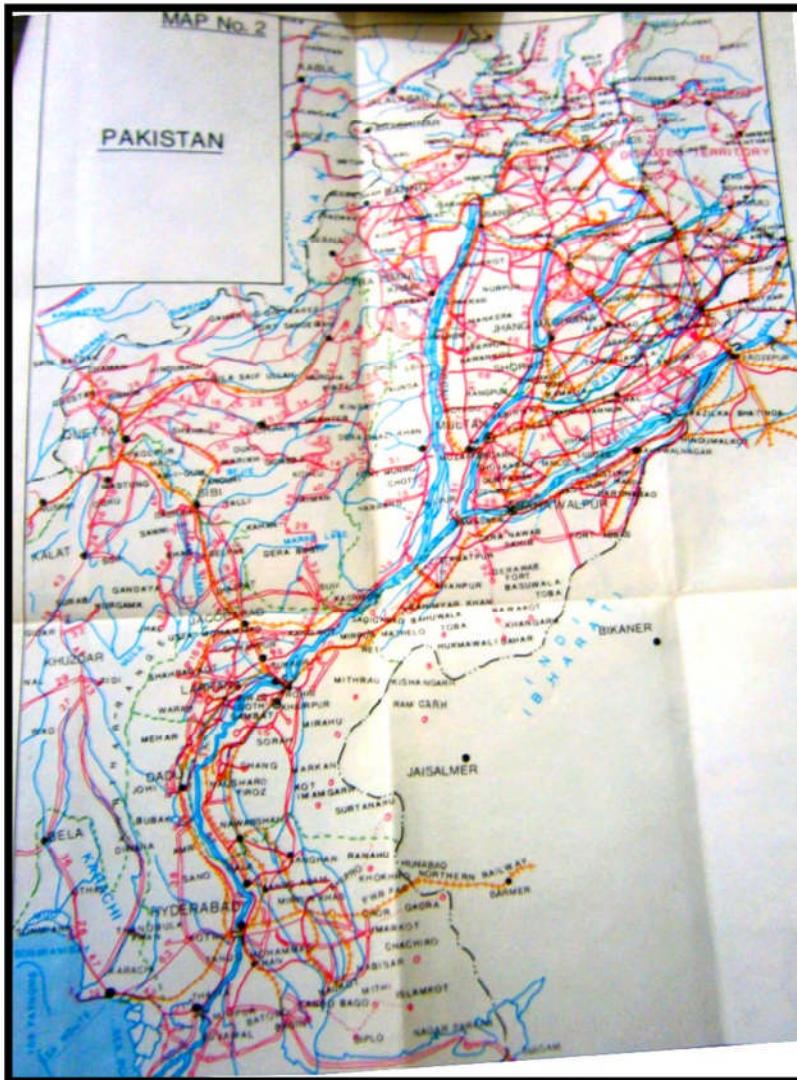
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MAP No. 2

PAKISTAN



MAP No 3

